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EMANCIPATION.

BY

MRS. SHERWOOD,

*Author of 'LITTLE HENRY and his BEARER,'
&c. &c.*



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EMANCIPATION.



THE late events which have agitated the minds of all the inhabitants of this once happy island have led me to so accurate a retrospect of my life, as, I trust, has not only had a good effect on my own mind, but is of such a nature, as, if put into a legible form, might, I think, be useful to others. With this view, I am suddenly become an author; having resolved to give a faithful account of the leading events of my family history; rather choosing to incur the risk of being recognized in my *own* little circle, than to deprive the world of what I consider to be a very valuable and important lesson.

It cannot, under these circumstances, be supposed that I should choose to give my

real name: I will, therefore, call myself James Penson.

My father was the cultivator of a small farm; part of which he held under a nobleman who resided in the adjoining parish, the other part having long been in our family. The tenement which my father occupied is called The Woodhouse, from its situation within the precincts of a wood belonging to his noble landlord; and the gardens and fields behind the house have been redeemed from the forest within the memory of my grandfather. The approach to the front of the house was through an avenue in the woods; and, from the contiguity of this front to the trees, it seldom saw the sun, excepting on a fine day in winter, when the woods were leafless.

Mine were as worthy parents as ever children were blessed with. They were simple people, knew little of the ways of the world, and had no ambition; having scarcely any other object in life, I verily believe, but to live inoffensively in the present world, and to be with their Saviour in that which is to

come. Their gains were little, but their wants were less: hence they were rich.—They lived in comfort and in plenty; and they made it a rule of never sending a poor person empty from their door. Begging in those days, (for I am speaking of fifty or sixty years ago,) was not become the system which it now is; and there was not, then, the risk of actually injuring society, and encouraging vice, which there now would be, in harbouring and feeding every wanderer who chooses to solicit our hospitality.

My parents had only two children; viz. myself, and my brother Robert. There is only one year's difference in our age, and I am the elder.

I lived at home till I was ten years of age; and those were happy years. O how have I, in after-life, looked back with anguish and regret on those pure and innocent days—comparatively pure and innocent—when we followed our father to the fields in the morning, and finished the evening in reading the Word of God, verse by verse, to our mother! How dear, then, was Robert to me! how precious

was he in my sight! How did I love my parents! What a number of innocent pleasures we then enjoyed! Who was the first to tell our mother when the chickens were beginning to break the shell, or when another lamb had appeared in the field—who knew where the first violets bloomed, or the first roses unfolded themselves—but Robert and myself? But, when I was ten years of age, a sad change for me took place.

My father's elder brother, who was a surgeon and apothecary in a small town in Devonshire, came to see us; and, having been married many years without hope of children, he persuaded my parents to permit him to adopt me; and the good people consented, not knowing the character of the man to whom they were intrusting me: and thus I bade adieu, at once, to my home, my brother, and my happiness.

I still fancy I can see my Robert, in his Sunday-coat of russet grey, rubbing the tears from his eyes, as he stood in the street of our village; and still hear the solemnly-pronounced blessing of my father, when he listed me

to the top of the heavy coach, by the side of my uncle.

It had been promised that I should return to the Woodhouse for a few weeks during the next summer. But that summer, and many other summers, winters, springs, and autumns, passed away, before I saw my native place again. Our village is at least two hundred miles from what was my uncle's residence, and it was no easy matter for a child to undertake such a journey; therefore, during the first few years of my residence in Devonshire, my visit to my home was put off from season to season; and, after a while, I was become so useful to my uncle in his business, that he could not part with me: and thus, from the age of ten to twenty-four, I never saw my parents.

In the mean time, I was advancing in the way that I suppose my uncle intended I should go; that is, if I may judge of the end desired by the means which were used to obtain it. My uncle lived in a small town, where he was the only surgeon; and, being also an apothecary, he kept a shop; and,

while he was busy in his shop, or with his patients, his wife was continually engaged in keeping up his interest, as she would have it thought, by paying and receiving visits. As to religion, I do not suppose that either my uncle or aunt ever troubled themselves about it; but a rule or motive of action was soon given to me, which was quite independent of all pious considerations.

I was soon given to understand, that, if I did not please the relations with whom I resided, I should be the worse for it; and, accordingly, I soon learned to accommodate myself to their wishes, at least in their presence; and I managed matters so well, that I always retained my uncle's favour.

I was kept in my uncle's shop till I was twenty-one; receiving, in the mean time, occasional lessons in Latin, and other branches of polite education, from a schoolmaster residing in the town.

I have said, that my uncle never concerned himself about religion. But he was a fierce politician; and talked of the tyranny of our governors, and of the rights of man, and the

privileges of women; with the cruelty of parents, and the pride of the great. He used to speak of the Almighty as of a kind of abstract Being, who, having made a race of weak creatures, was inclined to wink at their errors, and was ever ready to pardon their offences. He always smiled, if any one spoke of the influences of the Spirit in his presence; and it was well if he did not add some profane remark to this exhibition of contempt. He spoke of our Lord Jesus Christ as a fine example of human excellency, a dignified lawgiver, and a wise man; not considering, that, if Jesus Christ was not really what he professed to be, viz. a God incarnate, he must have exercised the most awful blasphemy of which mortal man was ever guilty. And, finally, he spoke of my father as being a good, honest, simple man, who understood nothing of life or of human nature; directing me, at the same time, not to alarm his prejudices by introducing my own or his opinions in any of my letters.

When I had entered my twenty-first year,

I was sent to London to walk the hospitals, and remained there for two or three years; being received, for a time, as an apothecary in one of the public infirmaries.

I was confirmed in all the false principles with which my uncle had inspired me, by the society into which I fell in Town: for I attended a tavern every evening, where a set of ignorant young men used to meet, to sup, and discuss, over a bowl of punch, the laws of our country, the conduct of our rulers, and the defects of our Church establishment. I was a leading speaker in these parties; and it was my favourite maxim, that all compulsion was to be avoided, as far as possible, in our dealings with our fellow-creatures; that universal toleration ought to be allowed to every religion; and that every man's house was his castle, and no one had any right to interfere with him within its walls.

I am ashamed to think what blasphemous nonsense I used to spout on these subjects; as if any society could hold together without the links or bonds of union that a regular government affords. It might as well be sup-

posed that a human being might walk about, and be a perfect man, and yet be destitute of the back-bone, as to imagine that society could exist without laws.—But to proceed with my narrative, and to let my principles speak for themselves.

I had scarcely finished my time in Town, when I was called back in haste into Devonshire, and found my uncle very ill, indeed, in a dying state. I also found that a revolution had taken place in the family during my absence, which did not please me by any means. My aunt had introduced a young man into the shop, who seemed to be already become my lord paramount, and was strongly upheld by her interest. My poor uncle was so ill, when I arrived, that he did not know me; and he died within two days; so that I suffered not a little uneasiness through the fear that he might, perhaps, have died without a will: for I was no longer in doubt that I had a very powerful rival in my aunt's esteem.

Immediately after the funeral, a will was, however, produced; and I found, to my great joy, that my uncle had left me a thousand

pounds, with all his books, clothes, and surgical instruments; and that he had bequeathed, also, two hundred pounds to my father; and as much to my brother. I stayed with my aunt till I had packed up and sent off my possessions, and secured my inheritance. I then coldly wished her adieu, and turned my views towards my home.

I had written one letter to inform my father of my uncle's death; and had dispatched a second, to give an account of our legacies; a third had followed to inform the family of my speedy return; though I could not name the day.

Since I had left my home, my once beloved home, such a revolution had taken place in my feelings, that I entirely ceased to look forward with delight to a re-union with my family. I had been in London, at the theatre, at the opera, at clubs, and in the gallery of the house of commons; I had heard parliamentary debates, and could reason and talk, and was exceedingly clever and genteel in my own opinion; and I really had contracted a

contempt for my father, and mother, and Robert; for I thought their mode of living utterly barbarous, while they sat in a kitchen with casement windows; and my mother wore a plaited mob, and a square muslin handkerchief pinned over her neck. My father, too, wore his own hair combed over his forehead, and a grey suit, all of one colour, even on a Sunday. As to Robert, I could not conceive what he might be like by this time; I remembered that he had brown hair when a boy, and that his eyes appeared to speak very often when his better judgment admonished him that it was needful to keep his lips closed. But I made up my mind that I should be ashamed of him; and I resolved to make my visit as short as decency would permit; though whither next to bend my steps I had not decided.

It was late on a Sunday evening in autumn, being precisely three weeks after my uncle's death, when I arrived at our village; and, having deposited my luggage in a safe place, I set out on foot for the Woodhouse, which is about a mile from the village.

A very strange sort of feeling took possession of me as I advanced, and saw by moonlight, (for, like most heroes of romance, I was favoured on this occasion of my return to my father's house with the light of the full moon,) the various objects imprinted on my memory from early childhood; many of which, together with the circumstances connected with them, had glided away from my mind many years before.

At length, a light from the kitchen of the Woodhouse began to shine upon my path, and presently I discerned the outline of the two gable-ends of the old-fashioned mansion marked against the pale cold light of the sky, together with the high, clustered chimneys.

I advanced with quicker steps: I hastened to the door, and knocked. I heard a voice within—"Surely it cannot be dear James"—and in the next minute I found myself in the arms of my relations. It was not till after various salutations had taken place in the little vestibule, or entrance of the house, and I had been led into the large kitchen, that I had leisure to look about and see what

sort of people I had for my relations. It was much to the advantage of their appearance that they were all dressed in new mourning; the decency and comeliness of which is generally allowed. Notwithstanding which propitious circumstance, I had not sat five minutes without setting my father down in my own mind as a good sort of harmless, but ignorant old man; and my mother as a specimen of a comfortable old woman, such as one should like to have about one when on a sick bed.

As to Robert, I was rather more at a loss to decide respecting him. He was not indeed a fashionable blade, such as I then thought myself, but his countenance beamed with intelligence and benevolence. There was no rustic sheepishness in his manner towards his town-bred brother; and when he spoke it was with correctness, and with little, if any, of the accent of a clown. He did not affect to be any thing but what he was, namely, an agriculturalist. Nevertheless, he seemed to have conceived a correct view of what is proper, and even graceful in that character; and

I found it was impossible to withhold respect from a person of his attractions.

In addition to my own relations, there were three persons who had been evidently sitting with the family before I had entered. Two of these were servants, a man and a woman; but the third was as lovely a young woman of about eighteen, as I had ever beheld. She was soon introduced to me as a distant relation, an orphan, living with my mother. They called her Ellen, and I really was so much pleased with her appearance, that when I discovered, which I soon did, that she was a favourite of my brother's, I was displeased, and actually indulged the intention of attempting to disturb the good understanding which I perceived to exist between the young people. My mother busied herself to spread a table for me without loss of time; and, as I had travelled all the last night, I was not sorry to get a good supper and go to bed.

A good night's rest quite removed my fatigue. My portmanteau had been brought from the inn, and, having rendered myself as much of a beau as clean linen, powder, and

pomatum could make me, I descended the stairs, and, the parlour-door being open, I found that a fire had been lighted in it out of compliment to me; while my breakfast was there arranged on a small round table, with all the delightful appendages of thick cream, fresh butter, and white bread. The kettle was hissing by the fire. My first motion was to look for the bell-rope, but seeing no such specimen of refinement, I applied myself to a hand-bell which lay on the table, and rang authoritatively. The bell was immediately answered by Ellen, who entered in a morning dress, the very pattern of rural neatness, and, begging me to excuse my mother, who had a little job to finish in her dairy, she sat down to make my tea.

It occurred to me that this was a most propitious occasion for shewing off my superior breeding; and I scarcely know on what impertinences I might have ventured, had not the determined gravity and distant politeness of my companion thrown me into such confusion, that I scalded my throat, and was very near cutting my hand in attempting to help

myself to a slice from the white loaf. The arrival of my mother, in a coloured apron, relieved my embarrassment, and restored my self-confidence; and, when Ellen left the room, which she soon did, we had a long conversation, during which she opened to me many of the family arrangements and plans.

She told me that my brother and Ellen were engaged to each other, and were to be married as soon as the deep mourning for my uncle was laid aside, and that they were to continue to live with them; and she seemed to have great delight in the anticipation of this arrangement. She also added, that my father had a plan for me, which she thought very good, namely, that I should, if it could be managed, enter into partnership with old Mr. Southcott, the surgeon of the village; and thus, when he dropped off, as he was getting very infirm, I might fall into his place.

"My father," I answered, "will, I suppose, give me leave to judge in these matters for myself. You know, mother, that you and my father have always lived in this wood, and you can know nothing of life; but, at any

rate, there can be no doubt that, in matters relative to my own profession, I must know better than people of your description."

"True, James, true, my dear," said my mother, colouring, and looking alarmed at the great man her son: "but I only gave you a hint, my dear, I meant no offence. To be sure you must know best." And the poor woman looked this way and that way, as if she thought that she had taken a liberty by sitting down in my presence.

I threw one leg over the other, and, looking up to the chimney-piece, began to make comments on a piece of embroidery in worsted, which had hung there in a frame ever since I could remember. "Mother," I said, "what an abominable smoky thing that is over the fireplace: why don't you make a bonfire of it?"

She replied, meekly, "It was my mother's work, James."

"Upon my word, the old lady was a second Arachne," I replied.

"Arachne!" she repeated, looking bewildered, "who is that, James?"

"One who adorns many houses, mother," I replied, "with her fine handiworks."

"Some London lady, I suppose," she answered: "but when Robert is married we are to have the parlour painted, and new curtains, and then Ellen's map of the world is to be put up in the gold frame, instead of that piece."

"Indeed," I said, "you will be prodigiously fine; and, hearing my brother's voice, I sauntered to the window, whistling an opera tune, and saw him and my father come up to the house in dresses suited to their occupations, though perfectly neat. I turned to look to the door as they entered; and presently they came forward and shook me heartily by the hand; after which Robert kissed our mother, and asked kindly after her health.

I might have taken a lesson from my brother, respecting my conduct to our mother; but I chose to despise him, and we never learn from those we despise.

I had no conversation with my father respecting my arrangements, until the evening

when we were all met round the fire. The plan at which my mother had hinted was then proposed to me, namely, that I should endeavour to be admitted into partnership with old Mr. Southcott.

"What sort of a practitioner may this same Mr. Southcott be?" I asked : "one of the old school, I have no doubt—ignorant, probably very ignorant—a mere quack."

My mother replied, that Mr. Southcott gave general satisfaction in the country, and obtained a handsome maintenance.

"Well," I said, "all that may be; and I thank you for your hints," I added, looking at one and the other of my parents ; "but you must allow me to judge for myself. I have seen a good deal of the world; and at my time of life —"

I was proceeding, when Robert took me up, saying, "At your time of life, and mine, too, James, persons are very apt to think themselves wiser than their parents. We have not even had experience enough to know our own folly."

I was offended, and did not endeavour to

hide my displeasure. I measured Robert with my eye; and looked him for a minute in the face with as much contempt as I could summon into my countenance.

Our mother noticed my manner, and said, "James, dear, don't be offended at Robert; when you know him better you will find that he is the kindest, best creature in the world: but you do not understand him yet. You have lived with very different kind of people: you have had a superior education. Robert does not understand the world." And then turning to her younger son, "Don't smile, Robert," she added, "you vex James; and you know that he is a stranger, and we must make much of him."

"I beg your pardon, James, if I have offended you," said my brother, offering me his hand, which motion I, however, affected not to see; and thus the conversation respecting my plans dropped for that time, and the discourse was turned into another channel.

During that evening, my father, who was as simple and good a man as ever existed, continued to give me such advice as he

thought for my good; it not having yet entered his head that he had a son who was determined to abide by his own opinions, and to act as he thought right in his own eyes, without any reference to divine or paternal authority. The subjects which he pressed upon me were chiefly religious and moral: I forget precisely what they were, as I paid little attention to them; but this I recollect, that I gave him maxim for maxim, and opinion for opinion, till I had fairly carried him into the land of confusion; for, without meaning to speak disrespectfully of my parents, which God forbid, the fact was, that they were not persons of superior abilities, though possessing that sort of sense which, when united with amiable tempers and true piety, fits persons above all others to get on comfortably through life.

While these things were passing between my father and me, Robert sat looking on the pavement; and I saw his colour change several times; but he did not speak till I made some remark respecting religion which did not please him; on which, looking up, he

said, "James, do you remember our infant days, when we used to climb up the old yew tree on a Sunday evening, to read the Pilgrim's Progress? those were happy times, James. I was very solitary in the yew tree when you were gone. Religion, in those days, was very sweet to us. I can remember that you were then my teacher, and—"

"And now, I suppose, you would wish to become my teacher?" I said, interrupting him. "But, understand me, Robert, I am now for liberty of conscience, and emancipation from spiritual authority. I have no idea of one man dictating to another in matters of this kind; and, therefore, I trust that you will not think of interfering with me."

"Please to explain yourself," said Robert.

"I do not see what explanation is necessary," I replied; "what I have said is very simple: all I would desire is, that men should exercise the same liberality one with another, as God exercises towards us all. He created us with various intellectual endowments, and reasoning faculties; and with different inno-

cent and pleasurable feelings; and he has placed us in a world, where we find a variety of circumstances to gratify those feelings, but he exercises no further influence over us; he leaves us to judge and act for ourselves; and to suffer or to be happy, in consequence of our own evil or good conduct."

"According to your plan, then," replied my brother, smiling, "he ought to have turned us out of his hands full-grown; and not to have placed us, during the first years of our lives, in such a situation of weakness as to constitute us dependent on the mercy of others; and, hence, to become, in the natural course of things, subservient and subjected to parents; who, after having had the trouble of rearing us, think they have a right to counsel and influence us through life? And, really," he added, smiling still more decidedly, "Providence has made a great mistake by compelling us, according to the laws of nature, to enter life in a state of such entire helplessness: for to this cause we may attribute all the tyranny which exists in the world; for we find, from the notes of our

old Bible, that, from the patriarchal government, arose the monarchical first; and then from this all other regular governments had their origin; moreover, from the necessities of man in his infancy, also, proceed the dependence of the wife upon her husband, and many other systems of tyranny of the same kind; with all the various ties and clogs of domestic life; from all of which we might have been exempted, had we been introduced into the world full-grown, and entirely independent of each other."

"Dear Robert," said my mother, "how you talk! Did ever any one hear of a person being full-grown when he was born? How can you go on so; and presume to find fault with Providence?"

"O! Mrs. Penson," said Ellen, "you do not understand Robert, he is only joking. I dare say Mr. James understands him." And she then addressed me for the first time since our meeting at breakfast, saying, "You must not suppose, Mr. James, that your brother is ignorant, though he has always lived in the country--there is often a great deal of time

for people to read and think too, when they live in the country."

I found that I was likely to have two, instead of one, against me, whenever I attacked Robert; and that my brother was not quite so weak an adversary as I expected: I, therefore, closed the argument, by saying, that I should be departing from my own principles, if I did not allow my brother to enjoy his opinions as freely as I did mine; adding, that I considered emancipation from all prejudices, to be a state of things greatly to be wished: and, thus speaking, I took up my candle, and went to my bed-room; resolving to get out of the house, and into a settled situation, as soon as I could.

I have now said enough to shew my reader what he may expect of me; and shall, accordingly, pass over the events of the three succeeding years as succinctly as possible.

Notwithstanding my father's advice, I did call upon Mr. Southcott; and actually did contrive, with the consideration of a few hundreds, to persuade him to take me as a partner; and, more than that, within two years I

married his niece Eliza ; and entered, by his death, into full possession of his business, his new brick house with two bow windows, his garden, his fish-pond, his paddock, his old horse, and his cow ; with a quantity of ready money, in which sum was contained the premium I had given for the partnership. But, before I had the honour of leading Miss Eliza to the altar, Ellen had become the wife of Robert, and the young pair had fixed their residence with their parents at the Wood-house ; a scheme which, in this particular, answered to the extent of their wishes.

And now my reader may picture me to himself, a smart young surgeon ; not indeed, perhaps, of the first style, but quite sufficiently polished for my line of practice ; extremely well pleased with myself ; and, as times then were, by no means deficient in the knowledge of my profession ; with my smart house ; a wife who was far less disagreeable to me than might have been expected, when it is considered that I sought her only from interested motives ; and a sufficient income to enable me to live with comfort, and lay a little by.

What more did I want to render me a happy man, it may be asked ; and it may also be answered, I wanted humility ; and, in wanting that, I wanted every thing : because humility is the only substantial basis on which happiness can be reared ; for in wanting humility, as it concerns our spiritual affairs, we must ever remain ignorant of our need of a Saviour ; and in wanting it in our temporal affairs, we must be ever going wrong, and heaping up stores for the future of regret and sorrow.

I am about to speak of my wife as she was, and as she would now speak of her former self, without the fear of incurring the smallest displeasure ; for I trust that she is now, and has been for some years, a totally changed character.

She was young when I married her ; and, being an orphan, she had been brought up at an ordinary school. She was handsome, and had acquired a taste for company, but was not a bad housewife ; and, as I was much from home, provided I found a good meal, and my house neat, on my return, and disco-

vered that my bills at Christmas were not larger than I had expected, I was very well satisfied; though, even during the first year of my marriage, my father hinted to me, that there were some things in my wife's conduct which it might be well to correct. "Your wife, my dear James," my father said to me, one day, "is young, and you are a great deal from home: her dress is remarked as being too much in the fashion—somewhat out of the common way; and, as your family are known to be plain sort of people, it is not thought consistent. Perhaps a kind word from you might set this matter right;" and he was adding more, when I interrupted him, by saying, "As long as my wife does not do any thing actually immoral, father, I shall not interfere with her. If every person, in unimportant matters, were to be subservient to the will of another, what a miserable condition on earth would ours be rendered! I am a respecter of the rights of women, as well as those of men. The husband and wife bind themselves together in society for mutual convenience. The man

takes his part, the woman hers; the woman manages matters in her sphere, the man in his. There is no need of interference on either side, so long as they respect each other's privileges. The shape and form of my wife's bonnets do not affect my comfort; she may fashion them as she pleases. In these matters I am for liberty of conscience."

"Your comfort, James," replied my father, "is not what we are talking of, but your respectability. If your wife is not prudent in such matters, you will be blamed. A man either derives shame or honour from his wife's appearance. He therefore cannot be so independent of her as you pretend."

"Your ideas, let me tell you, Sir," I replied, "are quite old-fashioned—obsolete—out of date. Permit me to explain to you the change of views which has taken place since your juvenile days. The march of intellect, during the last thirty years, has been more rapid than for hundreds of years before. The present generation, instead of blindly following the past, has been brought to perceive the fallacy of many opi-

nions which were formerly held as infallible. For instance: that system of domestic tyranny which has pervaded all ranks and degrees of men until the present time, is now exploded, and a new code of morals is introduced —one more suited to the weakness of our nature, and to the laws of the divine government—one, in fact, more rational, and better suited to the amiable nature of man."

My father looked perplexed as I proceeded, and I was wicked enough to be amused by his very apparent confusion of manner. I was enjoying my triumph, standing behind my counter, and seemingly more engaged with my phials and drugs than with the argument, when a champion, with whom I never could grapple so successfully as with my father, entered the shop. This was my brother, who had scarcely appeared, when my father appealed to him, asking him if he had not heard some very unpleasant remarks made on the dress of his sister-in-law on the Sunday before, as he was coming out of church. "And I was just saying to James, Robert," continued the good old gentleman,

"that, as his wife is so young, a kind word from him might be advantageous: not that I would make mischief, for the world, between man and wife; but, as James is five or six years older than Eliza, he might, you know, just give a gentle hint, and set things all right at once; for, after all, there is no great sin in these fine fashions; only, you know, people will talk."

Robert smiled, and shrugged up his shoulders, hinting, that it would never do for him to interfere between his brother and his wife; and was proceeding to other matters, when I insisted on his hearing what I had to say.

"Robert," I said; "it would save a vast many contentions, in future, if my father could be made to understand my way of thinking; and could learn not to bring my actions to the standard of his own opinions; which, as I just now said, are obsolete and out of date. The progress of intellect," I continued, with much pomposity, "has, it is very certain, proceeded with increased velocity from age to age, in proportion as the shadows of ignorance and darkness have withdrawn.

This progress has, no doubt, been precipitated, to an almost incalculable degree, by the art of printing, and the consequent general diffusion of learning." Here I paused, to take breath, and, indeed, to consider what I was going to say; for I began to feel myself somewhat bewildered; and Robert was so provoking as not to attempt any sort of interruption, which, of whatever description, would probably have relieved me considerably, and set me off again with renewed velocity. But he was mischievously silent, and stood in an attitude of mute and respectful attention, as if bowing to my superior genius. I was, therefore, obliged to proceed; and added—"In short—in short, owing to this rapid march of intellect," and there I hesitated again, for I did not like the expressive smile which rested on Robert's countenance; "in short, we consider that—that many things which were once thought right are now wrong, and *vice versa*."

"And what was once thought wrong is now right," added Robert: "is that what you mean by *vice versa*?"

"Vice! vice!" said my father, getting quite warm: "you may well talk of vice and wickedness; too much learning, I am sure, has made you mad, James. I fear you don't deal in such a drug as common sense in your shop, boy, or I should turn doctor myself, and prescribe a few grains for your own use;" and, so saying, he walked out of the door, sighing heavily as he stepped into the street.

"There now," said Robert, with displeasure, "you have made our father unhappy with your abominable nonsense. Pray is it among your new discoveries that it is a good and right thing to make a grey-headed parent weep, for I saw the tears in his eyes? but you cannot have taken leave of your senses altogether, James. What do you mean by all this nonsense? you have some meaning, I suppose?"

I became angry in my turn, and spoke roughly to my brother; but we were both more calm presently; and, as I was just stepping out to visit a patient who resided about half a mile in the country, we walked together, and I then tried to make him under-

stand what I meant. I first began by asking him if he thought that a custom or principle must be good because it was ancient?

He replied, "Certainly not; otherwise the customs and habits instituted before the flood must have been the best, because they were the first established on earth."

I must remark in this place, that almost all my brother's learning is derived from Scripture.

"You grant, then," I answered, "that old customs may be bad, and old received principles may be false?"

"Neither customs nor principles are necessarily good because they are old," replied Robert; "neither are they necessarily bad for that reason."

"True," I replied; "I am willing to argue fairly."

"But is it not probable," I answered, "that, as science and literature advance, many things may hereafter appear right to us which now seem wrong, and the contrary?"

"I allow that every thing is capable of

improvement, in theory and in practice, too," replied Robert, "excepting religion and morality. These, indeed, may, and we trust will, be better attended to in practice as knowledge increases, but their theory cannot be amended. We can have no new lights on these subjects beyond what the Bible can supply; and our fathers had the Gospel; and the moral law was declared ages past, and will continue in its perfection for ever. Therefore, I deny what you assert, that the opinion of religious persons can ever change respecting right and wrong."

"Surely," I replied, "the same things may be seen in a different point of view, by an enlightened and an ignorant person."

"Not simple matters of morality, and right and wrong," replied my brother. "In these things the conscience is an unerring guide. Every man is more or less aware when he is doing wrong. Else why have even the smallest children recourse to concealment when they meditate an immoral act?"

"The fear of shame or punishment," I answered, "is what induces this deceit or con-

cealment, which we see in all children, when they seek to do what they think will not please their parents. And now I am come to the point at which I was aiming. Those persons who have received the new and improved light of which I am speaking, would wish to see a more easy and charitable discipline established in the place of those severe laws by which offences are multiplied, and occasions of guilt are created."

"Really, James," replied Robert, "you must explain yourself further before I can understand you."

"For instance: let us first speak of our religious establishment as it exists in this country," I answered. "Why should it be a sin to preach without a gown and cassock? or to pray extempore, instead of using a prescribed form?"

"I do not know that it is a sin," replied Robert.

"It is so far a sin, as that those persons who do not conform to these rules, are excluded from many offices in Church and State," I replied."

"For the same reason," replied Robert, "that you would refuse to take a partner or apprentice in your profession who disapproved of your mode of practice."

"I don't say that I should refuse any partner or apprentice on that account," I answered; for I was determined to uphold my sentiments through thick and thin.

Robert smiled.

Nothing used to provoke me, at that time, so much as the playful manner of my brother, though there was not a grain or scruple of sarcasm in his appearance, or, I verily believe, in his mind. And I asked him what amused him so much.

"I was thinking," he answered, "what a plight the poor patients would soon be reduced to, when the doctor and his apprentice chose to think and act upon different principles."

"Robert," I said, "surely you can never be serious?"

"Well, I will," he replied.—"And to return to our religious establishment. I think it is reasonable that persons whose opinions

do not agree with those of the bulk of the nation, in spiritual matters, should be excluded from situations of authority in the country; though I think it would be very hard to deprive them of the free exercise of their religion."

"I cannot see what religion has to do with government," I replied.

"Every man's principles," returned Robert, "must have much to do with his actions: for instance, do not your principles and mine operate powerfully on us both, in the management of our respective wives. Were Ellen to wear a cap or bonnet I did not approve, I should tell her of it immediately, and should be displeased if she did not change the fashion."

"In that case," I replied, "you would convert the simple act of wearing a topknot, which did not suit your taste, into a breach of morals; and here is precisely an exemplification of what I began my argument with, namely, that offences may be multiplied, and occasions of guilt created, by too severe a discipline. And hence, I approve of the wisdom, and I ad-

mire the policy of that system which I hope to see established in our island before many years are passed. I would have every situation of authority and honour under government laid open, without test or enquiry, to every respectable person of whatever creed he might be. I would have every assistance and every encouragement given to immoral persons, by which they might be brought back into the bosom of their families. I would have the utmost tenderness shewn even to the felon, whom we are obliged to exclude from society in self-defence. And I should be sorry ever to exercise any thing like discipline over a faithless wife, or an undutiful son or daughter, so long as any hopes remained of reclaiming such a one by tenderness or forbearance, or by any conceivable exercise of charity or love."

I then proceeded to spout certain absurdities which I thought very fine, respecting universal love and charity, philanthropy, and benevolence; denominating indiscriminate forgiveness a godlike attribute; when Robert interrupted me, by simply asking, to what God

I attributed this quality. "Not, I trust," he added, "to the God of the Christians? for the very foundation and basis of true Christians is this, brother; that the Lord our God, being perfectly holy and just, could not forgive sin as an absolute God; or without a sacrificial atonement. And hence, to harmonize the attribute of mercy with that of justice, he ordained, before the foundation of the world, his own Son to be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world; thus exhibiting his incapacity of forgiving sins, (to speak after the manner of men,) by the very measure which he took, in his divine wisdom, to shew his infinite love towards his fallen creatures. Do not, therefore, think, James," continued my brother, "that you are imitating the divine character by this blind and indiscriminate benevolence which you so much praise; which in fact is but a device of the Evil One, infused into the minds of men, in order, no doubt, to confound all proper distinctions of right and wrong; and actually to make it men's interests to do ill that they may obtain favour."

I was by this time at the door of my patient's house, and not sorry to part from my brother, with whom I found it impossible to coincide in any one opinion.

From that time, my brother and I had many discussions of the same nature, but neither of us was in the least disposed to give way; and, therefore, our arguments only tended to make us uneasy in each other's company, and to discomfort both our parents and Robert's wife; all of whom, as well they might, thought me decidedly wrong; that is, as far as they could understand me.

After this, years passed on without any great changes, excepting that both families were augmented by the birth, in one of two children, and in the other of three. My brother's son was the eldest of this generation, and was called George, after my father. My son was his junior only by a few months: we called him William, after my deceased uncle. In two years more a daughter was added to our family, and another son to my brother's; and, as much as eight years afterwards, a second daughter was given to me, on which

dear child we bestowed the name of Sarah.

It was when my son William and my daughter Bessy had attained the ages of five and three, that the baleful effects of my false principles began to display themselves more evidently. My wife, as I before said, was young and inexperienced when she married me; and my absurd notion of not interfering with her caprices, had deprived her in many instances of the benefit of my advice. There is an old saying, that "two heads are better than one;" and even granting that a man may not always be wiser than his wife, yet it may be naturally supposed, that, when two persons having the same interests, take counsel together, some good may sometimes accrue from the very pause and demur which these consultations must occasion. But the independent principles which I entertained, as I before stated, had prevented me from holding any of these consultations with my wife; indulging the idea that I had no right to interfere with any of her little whims or caprices, or even with her

opinions, so long as she allowed me the same liberty. If, therefore, she did not improve under my management, no one can wonder; and, if our children were not guided in the best manner possible, it will not, I suppose, be a matter of surprise to my reader.—But to return to what I was about to say.

My mother was always anxious that all her family should meet on Easter Sunday at the Woodhouse to eat tansy-pudding, and accordingly on that Easter Sunday which happened soon after William had completed his fifth year we all met under the paternal roof, and had an excellent dinner; after which, my brother and myself took a walk with our little sons, and were returning, when the boys picked up a little puppy which belonged to a dog in the yard and brought it into the kitchen. The puppy made a whining noise, which attracting my brother's attention, he bade his son carry the little animal back to its mother. We then proceeded to the parlour, which was always used on this annual festivity, but were presently called out again into the kitchen by the loud cries of the little dog, which George

had placed upon the dresser, instead of carrying it back to its mother. The creature had fallen from the dresser, and was considerably hurt. My brother no sooner understood the state of the case, than he took a small horsewhip from a peg in the kitchen, and gave his boy a slight stroke over the shoulders, which made him roar louder than the puppy had done.

"Be silent, Sir," said his father. "If you give another roar, I shall give you another stroke. Go up to your room, pray to God to forgive you for your disobedience, and don't come down till you are humble."

The little fellow was silent in a moment, and went stumping up stairs, half frightened and half sullen. My brother then turned round to put up the whip in its place, and, in so doing, stepped near my boy, who, starting back, said, "Uncle, you are not going to beat me! Father never beats me!" and he looked boldly up to him as if he dared him to it.

"It is not my business to correct you, little Master," replied Robert, "while you

have a father to do you that good turn; —you have nothing to fear from me;” and he replaced the whip, and accompanied me into the parlour. There we found the rest of the family seated round the tea-table; and we, also, sat down: but I observed, that my brother was thoughtful; and, on Ellen asking where George was, he answered, that he had corrected him for disobedience.”

“ Yes,” I said, addressing my sister; “ he laid his horsewhip over his shoulders, and then sent him to his room till he had done roaring.”

“ He did very right,” replied Ellen, calmly, “ if he was disobedient.”

“ And don’t you ask what mighty offence a child of five years old could be guilty of, sister, to deserve such a punishment?”

“ I understood that he was disobedient,” she replied.

“ Disobedient!” I repeated: “ giddy, thoughtless, forgetful. He did not put the puppy down, when his father bid him.”

“ Well, what was that, brother James, but disobedience?” asked Ellen.

Robert reddened, while this was passing, and looked as if determined not to enter into an argument on the subject: but I was equally determined that he should; and challenged him to the contest, by saying, "Surely, Robert, it would be better to reason with a child at that age, when he does wrong, than to use such violent measures. I have never laid a hand on William."

"So he told me, just now," replied my brother.

"And you see the consequence, Robert: his will is free, his spirit unbroken; and he will tell the truth in the face of the whole world, whether it makes against him or not. But once lay the horsewhip across his back, and he loses that noble confidence for ever."

"Noble confidence!" repeated Robert: "might not another name be used for this sort of behaviour? Truth I delight in, but not when it proceeds from want of shame. Children should be taught to be ashamed of what is wrong, and be made to know that chastisements will follow bad conduct; and they should not be accustomed to suppose

that all is right, when they acknowledge their faults without shame or penitence."

" You will make a canting hypocrite of your boy, Robert," I said; " that is, if he does not, by and by, break the yoke, and leave your house. This sort of treatment might have done, years ago, when children, by comparing notes, could discover that the same process of tyranny was going on in every other family as well as their own. But in these enlightened days, when the march of intellect is making such rapid strides, another system must be adopted. Man must now be governed by reason, or not governed at all. Blind obedience can no longer be expected, either from wives, children, or servants. Man has discovered his rights, and will require to be treated with justice. Every man's conscience must now be a law to himself, and the regulator of his actions. I desire not the blind obedience of any person connected with me; nor can I understand why any individual should demand such submission from another. I abhor the system of controlling the actions or

principles of any free agent—such is man—and I reprobate every measure of government by which the reasoning and thinking powers of the subject are to be brought under the trammels of custom."

I was proceeding to this or some such effect, when the door was burst open, and George entered, his eyes being swelled, and his little features all blubbered and shining with tears; while his sobs were so loud as to shake his whole little body. Straight he ran to his father, and was on his knees in a moment before him, begging pardon; then to his mother; then to his grandfather; then to his grandmother; as if he felt that he could not have offended one, without offending all: imploring, entreating, with all the energy of infant eloquence; and not being satisfied, till he had received the kiss of peace from each honoured individual; nor being perfectly happy again, till lifted upon the knees of his father: where, as from a place of perfect security and happiness, he humbly waited until his portion was administered to him from the hands of his mother.

"What say you now, James?" said Robert, at the conclusion of this scene. "Who is so happy now as the contrite child, received again into his father's arms? Would all the reasonings of the wisest man that ever lived have had such speedy and salutary influence on this infant as the chastisement, given by the hand of affection, and which has produced these feelings in this short time?"

Where persons are resolved not to be convinced, no arguments will prevail. I determined to retain my own opinion, and Robert held as fast to his; and from that time, as if by mutual consent, we saw less and less of each other for several years; and, in consequence, our children met much seldomly.

About two years after that, I began to look out for a school for William. I sent him to one in the village; but, as I stipulated with the master that he never should use corporal punishment, and as my son was aware of this stipulation, it is not to be supposed that I could keep him there long. I therefore soon removed him; and, happening to meet with a schoolmaster at some distance, to whom

the forty or fifty pounds a year I paid for my son was an object of some consequence, I failed not to hear an excellent account of the youth's improvements from vacation to vacation: and, as fathers are sometimes blind to the faults of their children, I was by no means the first to observe that the reports of the master did not exactly tally with the manners, and appearance, and general improvement of the boy. Something, indeed, might be pleaded for me, in consideration of my constant occupation abroad; nevertheless, I had sufficient opportunity to have seen the faults of my son, had I not been blinded by self-conceit.

Bessy was sent to school soon after her brother. Her mother had chosen the same seminary in which she had herself been educated; and, as I left the management of my girl to her mother, I cannot be supposed to have understood more of my daughter's character than of her brother's. Bessy was as much as eight years old when Sarah was born.

My wife was very ill soon after the birth

of this child ; and, not being able to nurse her herself, the infant was sent to a cottager, who lived very near the Woodhouse, that she might be under the eye of my mother, whose talents as a good nurse were never questioned by me. The cottager was engaged to give the infant milk, and the little creature thrived so well in her country abode, that we left her for several years where she was ; and it may be supposed that she spent many hours each day with her relations at the Woodhouse.

When William was thirteen, he was brought home, and bound to me, to serve in my shop, and to gather what he could from me relative to my profession, to which I purposed to bring him up. Two years after this, Bessy left school ; and thus we had both our children at home again. And now the independent principles in which I had brought up my children, and which I had encouraged in my wife, began to display their riper fruits.

During the first few months, or perhaps I might say the first two years, of my son's residence with me, I had little to complain

of in him but a sort of insolence of manner, now and then displayed towards me and my wife, and universally evidenced towards his relations at the Woodhouse. I do not recollect whether the noun *quiz*, or the verb which answers to it, had been brought into use at that time ; but this I remember, that my son was continually employed in using that figure of speech which in these days we should call *quizzing* ; and that his elders and superiors were almost invariably the objects of his exploits of that kind : not that his cousins escaped ; for he was particularly bitter upon George, who was by this time become a very fine youth in appearance, and was, also, very well spoken of in the neighbourhood. I remember well, that, being in the shop on one occasion with my son, I was struck with his independent manner to a customer ; and I argued the point with him, and told him, that, as we lived by our patients, it was necessary for us to be polite to them.

“ I wonder then,” he replied, “ that you can submit to this manner of life, father. To be obliged to weigh out a scruple of magne-

sia, or measure a drachm of castor oil, for every fool who chooses to ask for such things, is a sort of servitude which is hardly to be borne. And then, to make a bow, and say, ‘Much obliged, Madam,’ to every old woman who chooses to lay out sixpence with one, really, father, it is what I cannot do.”

“And pray,” I answered, “what can you do then? or what situation can you choose in life, in which you must not submit to some of the humours of your fellow-creatures?”

In reply to this, my son muttered something, of which I only heard so much:—“When I am out of my time—when I am my own master”—&c.

“When you are out of your time,” I answered, taking up his words, “you will have more sense; and will find, that, if you are to get on in the world, you must submit to the customs of the world, and the laws of society.”

“You have often said, father,” he replied, “that those laws and customs of society, which prevailed in your younger days, and in my grandfather’s time, are all absurd and

out of date; that people know better now; and that the tyranny which was formerly exercised by parents and masters, cannot at present be tolerated. I am sure I have heard you say such things a thousand and a thousand times."

" You have mistaken me, William," I said, " quite mistaken me."

" I am sure I have not though," he replied; " I have heard you a thousand times laugh at the old sayings of my grandfather and grandmother, and speak of the march of intellect, and say how things would be changed by and by."

" Ay, by and by," I said, " mind that, William; things will be changed by and by, but they are not come to perfection yet: people are not yet so far enlightened as not to demand submission from those to whose well-being in society they contribute. I have no doubt but, as the march of intellect advances, these exactions will be no longer made; but, at present, we must bend a little to prejudices; and you must not offend our customers upon any account. There is no druggist's

shop within many miles of this; and I can assure you, that ever since I have been settled in this place, I have gained a very considerable emolument by the sale of drugs, and turned many hundred pounds in this way."

"More than I shall ever do," muttered my son.

I felt my fingers itch, to use a rustic phrase, to apply a horsewhip on this occasion to the shoulders of the youth; and, late in the day as it was, it would have been well if I had not resisted this inclination; but I had spouted so many absurdities for years past, upon the new mode of managing young people without coercion, that I was ashamed of departing from my own principles, and very unwilling to confess myself in the wrong. I, therefore, resolved to get on as well as I could with my son hoping that time would bring him to reason; for I was utterly ignorant of the depravity of man's nature, and still believed that all I saw amiss in my fellow-creatures proceeded from ignorance, bad government, prejudices, ill examples, and narrow-mindedness.

Soon after this conversation, Mrs. Penson

began to make complaints of her daughter ; alleging that she would not give her any assistance in her household ; that she spent half her day in looking out of the window ; was always teasing her for new dresses ; and was actually very insolent to her whenever she admonished her of a fault. These complaints, which were often repeated, and which came upon me at the time when I saw more and more every day of what I did not like in my boy, had rather the effect of making me irritable than of producing proper conviction ; and I interrupted my wife several times in the midst of her complaints, saying, "I wish you would exercise a little liberality towards your daughter : you cannot expect grey heads on young shoulders : she will be wiser by and by. When her face is less blooming, she will be less anxious to shew it ; and, when her person is less youthful, she will not feel so much pleasure in adorning it." Experience might have taught me, that vanity and levity are not overcome merely by the influence of age ; otherwise, how could we account for the number of vain old women who infest our public places,

bringing shame and contempt on wrinkles and hoary heads.

After the return of Bessy from school, our ill-arranged family went on together in an uncomfortable way for as much as two years; during which I became increasingly dissatisfied with my son; and so did Mrs. Pensson with her daughter. In the mean time, little Sarah, who had been brought home, was taken ill, first with the measles, and then with the hooping-cough; after which, she fell into so delicate a state of health, that I and her mother were very glad to yield to the solicitations of our relations at the Woodhouse, who requested that she might return to them; and, indeed, I was not sorry, that this my little darling (for my Sarah was a lovely child) should be removed from the influence of her brother and sister, who now began to give me more uneasiness than I liked to confess; but as I had about that period of my life as much as I could possibly do in my profession, I had less time to give way to reflections concerning the state of my family.

About the time when William was in his

eighteenth year, there came to settle in one of the handsomest houses in our village a sprightly widow-lady of about forty years of age. My wife immediately called upon her; and she took the earliest opportunity of employing me in a professional way, by sending for me to her footman; a youth who had been reared in the family, and was, I found, a great favourite with his mistress. This young man had met with a slight accident, which I soon remedied.

This lady, whom I shall call Mrs. Seymour, at first appeared to me to be a sort of blue stocking, or female pedant; and, being certainly a very weak woman, I found that it would be no difficult matter to get to her blind side and win her favour, by using some of those hard words and fine turned periods which I had so often used in vain while opposing the plain good sense of my brother Robert, and the straight-forward simplicity of my father.

Accordingly, in a very short time I was told that Mrs. Seymour had declared me the most agreeable man in the parish; and,

out of regard for me, she patronized my wife and daughter; and even began to complain of a nervous disorder, which made it necessary for me to call very often to enquire after her health. Thus the intimacy between the two families augmented; and, in the same proportion, the distance increased between ourselves and the worthy people at the Woodhouse.

Things went on in this way for more than a year, and I still retained Mrs. Seymour's favour; but, about that time, a middle-aged man, who was a native of the village, suddenly returned with a little independent property; and, having bought a small piece of ground, built and opened a meeting-house, which was immediately filled. Truth obliges me to say, that the parish was prepared for an invasion of this sort, from the neglect of our own minister; who, being a relation of the nobleman whose tenant my father was, had several other pieces of preferment; and, in consequence, had never resided among us, or even supplied us with a resident curate. Religion, therefore, had been for a long time

little attended to in the parish in general; and the state of the greater part of the inhabitants was that of the most profound ignorance. By reason of which, had the establisher of this chapel been a man who could have taught us the true doctrines of our religion, as many ministers do who are not exactly included within the pale of our national establishment, he might have been a blessing to numbers in our parish. But, unfortunately, this was not the case; Mr. Everard Johnson (for such was his name) was, to the extent, as ignorant as any journeyman curate in the united kingdom, and, perhaps, I might add, as immoral as the very worst sample of these; though he had some qualities which blinded his people, and made them believe that he was a prodigiously fine preacher, and a perfect pattern of all that is excellent. His voice was loud and deep; and he was even a greater adept than myself in using hard words and fine-turned periods. His person, too, was attractive; and he had a peculiar art in interpreting Scripture so as to confirm his own opinions. What these opinions were I should not soon

have known, had not my brother Robert informed me, on an occasion which I shall presently relate.

Mr. Johnson had scarcely opened his chapel, before Mrs. Seymour made her appearance there—was all enraptured—and insisted on my wife and daughter accompanying her in her next visit. My wife yielded to her solicitations, and came home in raptures, saying, that she had resolved she would henceforth be a constant attendant on Mr. Johnson.

“Do as you please, my dear,” I answered. “I shall not interfere with your wishes on this subject, so long as you do not desire me to accompany you. I was brought up in the Church, and am, for my own part, very well contented with the establishment.”

Mrs. Penson smiled, and said, “Then why do you not go to church now and then?”

“Because,” I replied, “my profession does not leave me the opportunity.”

From that period, my wife continued to attend Mr. Johnson’s ministry, both on Sundays and week-days; (for the chapel was

open one or more days in the week;) and soon after she became a decided follower of Mr. Johnson our annual meeting for tansy-pudding took place at the Woodhouse.

After dinner on this occasion, while all the family were present, Mr. Johnson's name was mentioned; and my father and mother both expressed strong dislike to the circumstance of a chapel being erected in the village, appealing to me on the subject to uphold their opinions: for neither of my excellent parents, even then, understood me well enough to guess how I should be likely to decide on any given subject.

"And pray, father," I replied, "why should you object to the erection of any chapel in which the poor are instructed; and in which the long-neglected flock may have a chance, at length, of receiving some improvement?"

"A poor chance, I fear, James," remarked my brother. "Are you aware what doctrine is preached in the new chapel?"

"No," I replied, "I never enquired. But my wife can inform you."

Robert turned his eyes upon his sister-in-law; and she answered his enquiring looks by saying, "I am sure, brother, that we hear nothing but what is particularly good from Mr. Johnson. He says, that, without religion and virtue, no person can expect to be happy in the next world; and he talks of our Saviour in the finest imaginable way. He says, that he is the first example of human excellence that ever appeared."

"And does he tell you, sister," asked Robert, "that this Saviour is one with God, and equal with God? that he became incarnate? and that it was necessary for him to live and die for our redemption? Does he tell you, that divine justice could not be satisfied with any thing short of perfect obedience? and that salvation could not be effected by any thing less than the sufferings of God in the human nature?" Then, turning to me, and addressing me in a solemn manner, "James," he said, "I do not object to this self-appointed teacher merely because he does not belong to our excellent establishment, but because he is a teacher of false doctrines.—

This is a fact which I was led to ascertain by a request made to me, a few days since, by George, that I would allow him to attend for once on Mr. Johnson's ministry; and I do not hesitate to say, that, from the result of my enquiries, I am convinced his preaching is not conformable to Scripture: in consequence of which, I have forbidden my family to enter within the walls of his chapel."

"And you would advise me to do the same?" I replied.

"I have no right to dictate to you, James," he answered.

"Certainly not," I said; "certainly not."

"But perhaps I might venture to advise?" added Robert.

Here my father took up the argument; and remarked, that it was always dangerous to follow teachers who had no fixed creed—no written articles—and who might change their doctrines and their forms of instruction at their own pleasure: and he added more much to the same purpose; concluding his discourse with a high encomium on our Liturgy and our Constitution; and speaking of a sis-

ter of his, who had died years ago, and had been led from error to error, till, at last, she had herself finished in being a public preacher—from having taken a prejudice against the preacher of her own church when yet in her early youth; “at which period of life,” he added, “the judgment is commonly very weak.”

The old gentleman brought both William and Bessy upon him for this last remark; and I hinted, that, if the judgment of young people were not always good, that of older persons, being liable to be warped by prejudice, was often no better.

This remark displeased my mother, who took up the contrary side very warmly; and the evening was terminated in so unpleasant a manner, that my wife and I resolved to make our visits at the Woodhouse less frequent than ever; while William and Bessy, during our walk home, spoke of the whole family at the farm with the utmost possible contempt.

From that period my wife became more and more under the influence of the new teacher; and Mrs. Seymour, who was a lover of novel-

ties, having declared herself the patroness of Mr. Johnson, nothing was heard of among a certain party in the village, but parties to the chapel, meetings in private houses, with other matters of the same kind; which are all in themselves good under proper regulations, and must be approved by every well-meaning person, with proper restrictions, but which, without such restrictions, are to be feared. Yet, as it was my principle to allow toleration to every one to the utmost possible extent, consistent with certain indefinite notions I entertained of the rights of man, I never enquired into the mode in which these things were managed, or attempted to control my wife in any of her schemes. But this new fancy of Mrs. Penson's had one effect which I did not immediately apprehend; it withdrew her from home and from attention to her family; and many things were hereby neglected, to which Mrs. Penson had formerly attended, as a wife should do.

About this time, my father and mother hearing certain reports which did not please them, ventured several times to advise me to

keep a more diligent watch over my family. I say ventured, for I was in the habit of receiving their advice with so much insolence, that it must have been extremely painful to them to have entered into any argument with me: but I had then unfortunately so much of the spirit of contradiction about me, that expostulations of any kind tended rather to confirm me in my errors than to lead me to a wiser mode of conduct. It would serve no purpose to repeat all the arguments used by my parents to induce a wiser discipline with my children; or to lead me to exercise that influence which every man ought to have with his wife to persuade her to keep more at home, and to practise her religious duties more in retirement than she was inclined at that time to do. Suffice it to say, that our last conference on these subjects ended in an open rupture. I gave my parents to understand that I desired no further interference by them in my affairs. And my mother, as she went weeping out of the house, said, " Well, James, I now give up for ever that wish which I have long foolishly indulged, namely, that George

and Bessy should make a match, and that the two brothers should thus again be united: for I now see the folly of entertaining such wishes; and I will henceforth endeavour to leave all to one who is as much wiser than I am, as the east is removed from the west."

It was not long after this conversation that Mrs. Penson had a party; to which she invited Mr. Johnson, Mrs. Seymour, and all those persons who favoured their notions; and there was a great deal of talking, and many whisperings; and Mr. Johnson offended me by making a direct attack upon me, because I did not attend his preaching; my wife, Mrs. Seymour, and Bessy all upholding him in their different ways.

I was plain with him on the occasion, and explained my principles to him, in the same way as I had done on many former occasions to others; observing, that although I had no leisure for going to church, yet, that I belonged to the establishment; had been brought up in it; and had no mind to leave it; thinking it as good as any other; adding, at the same time, that I was nevertheless a person of the most liberal

way of thinking, and would allow the utmost liberty to my family; and should never think of interfering with their sentiments and modes of worship. And, having thus declared myself, I left the room, in order to cut the argument short. But, as I afterwards found, my son took it up where I had left it, and uttered many disagreeable truths, which drew upon him the displeasure of the whole company, and that to such a degree, that many persons then present declared they would rather go ten miles for a drug, from that day forward, than enter my shop when he was behind the counter.

This animosity among my neighbours presently appeared in its effects, and threatened such serious consequences, that I, understanding the cause, became excessively angry with my son, and insisted that he should beg pardon of those whom he had offended. But he was violent, and not only refused to obey me, but insulted his mother, and told her that all this mischief had proceeded from her folly. "Why did you form this improper intimacy with such canting fools, mother?"

he said: "all this trouble proceeds from your nonsense."

I was enraged at this insolence, and reproved him very severely; on which he became sullen, and we were all in confusion, when Mr. Johnson, either by accident or design, came in; and, the case being opened to him, he took upon him to give his opinion. He told me at once that my son was very much disliked; and that I certainly should lose all the customers who esteemed him as their friend, if I persisted in keeping the youth in the shop: and he advised me to let my daughter wait upon those whom William had insulted.

Bessy in her turn was offended at this proposal, and I myself did not like it; but Mrs. Penson approved of it, and asserted it to be very proper and judicious; and, being thus upheld, Mr. Johnson insisted more urgently upon the expediency of his counsel. On which William suddenly veered round to his side, saying, that he did not see what Bessy was more fit for than to weigh drugs; adding, that he would be bound to teach her

in a month all she need to know: the young man inwardly chuckling and triumphing at the mortification which his sister betrayed.

I could hardly restrain myself from pointing out the door to Mr. Johnson, and bidding him avail himself of it, to walk out of the house: but he had scarcely taken his leave, at his own pleasure, than I burst out upon my wife with the more fury, from the restraint I had put upon myself in his presence, and said, "What does this puppy come here for, to dictate to me in my own house? What has he to do with the management of my family?"

"What did you let mother go to his chapel for, then, father?" said my son: "did not uncle Robert, months ago, advise you to keep her and Bessy more at home?"

"What has attending the man's preaching to do with his ruling my house?" I asked.

"Why, a great deal," replied William. "What are people governed by, but their principles? as uncle Robert says. If Mr.

Johnson has taught mother to think as he does, why, to be sure, she will act as he wishes. What else could you expect, father?"

"Cannot you be silent, William?" said Mrs. Penson. "Did you not, just now, say you approved of what Mr. Johnson proposed regarding Bessy? and now you are turning against him, now that he is gone away."

"No," replied William, "I am not turning against what he proposed about Bessy;" (and he nodded provokingly at his sister;) "but I do think that the man steps out of his place when he comes here, and lays down his injunctions in the way he does. And I blame you, father, for letting him come at all; for any body of common sense might have foreseen how it would end, when he was gaining such influence over mother, and when his sentiments are so opposite to yours. For, if a man has any spirit in him, connected with those notions he thinks highly of, he will be for making others do as he thinks right; and, for that reason, father, when I have a house of my own, and a wife of my own,

and children of my own, they shall do as I wish, or I will know the reason why."

" Well, young man," I said, prompted by an indignation which, had I given way to, would have induced me to lay my horse-whip over the young man's shoulders, " in accordance with what you have just said, I shall take the liberty of bidding you to be silent; and of hinting to Mrs. Penson, that I should be obliged to her to keep her doors shut henceforward against that pragmatical fellow, Mr. Johnson. And as to you, Bessy, you will understand, that it is my wish, when you see any persons in the shop to whom your brother is disagreeable, that you go to them, and shew them as much civility as lies in your power."

A very urgent call, from a patient at some miles' distance, forced me at that moment to break up this disagreeable intercourse; but it may well be believed that my reflections, as I rode to and from my patient's house, were not the most agreeable. I, however, then resolved, though too late, to be firm; and not only to forbid my wife's attendance on Mr. John-

son's ministry, but also to forbid him the house, and never to allow her to visit Mrs. Seymour but in my company.

The case of my patient had not detained me so long as I expected; I therefore returned before it was supposed I should; and it was about seven in the evening. I saw my son in the shop; and he told me that my wife and daughter were at Mrs. Seymour's. I hastened there after them; and found Mrs. Seymour, Mrs. Penson, and Mr. Johnson in the parlour; but Bessy was not with them. I was asked to sit down, and tea was handed to me; after which, Mrs. Seymour said, that she had heard I was offended with Mr. Johnson; and then she proceeded to apologize for him, though he was present, and to say that he was too frank, and could not help speaking his mind. "In that respect, dear Mrs. Penson," she added, "he resembles you—all warmth of heart—and now and then, perhaps, a little warmth of temper too. But allow me, my dear friends, to bring you together. Let the religion of one of you, and the benevolence and candour of the other,

produce the blessed and lovely fruits of charity. Let me see you give your hand to Mr. Johnson, my dear Mr. Penson. Let me witness this work of peace. And may the remembrance of the unpleasant circumstances of this day be blotted entirely from your memories!"

Being thus urged, I shook hands with Mr. Johnson; though I secretly determined that my wife should never go to his chapel again.

It was getting dark, although it was summer-time, when this reconciliation was effected; and I had just solicited my wife to prepare to accompany me home, when I thought of my daughter, and asked where she was.

"O, Bessy is gone into the pleasure-grounds," said Mrs. Seymour, "to see the improvements I have been making. We could not think of keeping her shut up here with us old people." Mrs. Seymour then rang, and sent a servant to call her; and she presently came in, appearing heated and agitated, which I did not fail to notice.

As we walked home, I told my wife that I

would have her stay more at home, and keep her daughter more with her; and I also gave Bessy a lecture: in consequence of which, we all arrived at our house in very ill humour, and in that state went to bed.

Mrs. Penson wept the greater part of that night, and the next morning complained of a headache; and in a few hours was, really, so unwell as to be obliged to go to bed. She kept her room some weeks with a rheumatic and feverish complaint; and I was a good deal disturbed for some days about her health. But my fears of this kind presently gave way to unpleasant feelings of another nature: for, when a little better, nothing would satisfy her but she must send for Mrs. Seymour; and this lady, when admitted, insisted upon it that Mrs. Penson's mind was uneasy, and that she must be permitted to see Mr. Johnson.

I persisted, for some time, in saying that Mr. Johnson should never enter my house again; but Mrs. Seymour appealed to my own principles, and reminded me of my own words. "Have you not often said, my dear Mr. Penson," said she, "that the

old system of things is now about to be exploded?—that the principles of domestic tyranny, so long held as sacred, are now, from the rapid march of intellect, considered entirely wrong?—that you have no idea of influencing the opinions of your wife?—and that you think every human being's conscience ought to be a law to himself? Have I not heard you say, if your wife were an Hindoo, you would not hinder her having her little idol in her own chamber, or on your mantle-piece? and if she were a Mahometan, she should have her mosque and her minaret in the corner of your field, if it would give her any pleasure? Why then deprive her of a rational and improving teacher? why deprive her of that which is necessary to the peace of her mind? You say that you are content with your own religion, and your own forms of worship. Well and good: be it so. We may and do think you mistaken; nevertheless we will let you alone: yet, at least, we have a right to demand the same forbearance from you which we exercise towards you."

"The same," I said; "but not more."

"Not more! what do you mean?" she answered.

"Why," I replied, "that you should let me and my family alone. I do not come into your house, and meddle with your family, as you do with mine. I have never given my opinion about your proceedings; or wished to have any influence in your affairs."

"Neither does Mr. Johnson wish to interfere with you, Mr. Penson," she replied: "all I ask for him is, that he may be permitted to administer spiritual comfort to her who is in so much need of such consolation."

I might fill a quire of paper with a relation of the various arguments on this subject which took place between me and Mrs. Seymour. Suffice it to say, that, by dint of perseverance, she at length prevailed; Mr. Johnson was permitted to visit the house again; and from that time I was sensible, from day to day, that I was less and less the master of my own family. Not that Mr. Johnson, at first, openly interfered in my concerns; this he avoided doing on many ac-

counts: but he was a man of strong mind, and had an object in view of which he never lost sight. He had been educated by Socinians; and the advancement of his sect with the establishment of a congregation in the place appointed him by his superiors, was that at which he aimed with undeviating steadiness.

It was by gaining influence over the females of such families as he could find admittance to, that he thought he should best obtain his end; and no doubt he had hit upon a method most likely to ensure success. He had won the confidence of Mrs. Seymour and Mrs. Penson by pressing upon them the importance of religion in general; though he had kept them in entire ignorance respecting the real nature of the true faith; and he was always ready to excite their fears, whenever they attempted to throw off his yoke, by making it appear that his cause and that of God's were one and the same;—an artifice which he upheld by the most flowery and impressive disquisitions, respecting the power of God, the beauty of virtue, and the horrors of death.

How far this man was sincere in his views of religion, and how far he was not so, I cannot pretend to say. But on this I cannot be mistaken, namely, that he was very sincere in attachment to his party; and, in consequence, left no means untried to gain proselytes to his own ways of thinking.

The first strong symptom which appeared of his influence in my family, when re-admitted, was a request, on the part of Mrs. Penson, that I should have Sarah at home. "Bessy is no comfort to me, but Sarah would be a very great one," she said: "she is a dear little girl; and when she comes home for a few days she is so neat, and so obliging, and so pleasant; and she is so excellent a needle-woman, and reads so correctly, and sings hymns so prettily, that it would be quite a pity she should be spoiled. And they say she will be ruined if she remains at the farm much longer, she will obtain such false notions of religion."

"They say!" I repeated: "who are they?"

"Mr. Johnson and Mrs. Seymour," replied Mrs. Penson.

"I wish Mr. Johnson and Mrs. Seymour

would let me and my family alone," I answered. "If you would be governed by your own good sense, Mrs. Penson, and not by the absurd arguments of these people, you would perceive, that if Sarah is a better behaved girl than Bessy, it is probable that is because she is better managed; and you would not wish to take her from those who have made her the lovely child which she is, to make her like the girl you have spoiled."

My wife gave up the point at that time; but, being urged by Mr. Johnson, she returned to the charge again and again; and, no doubt, would have carried her point, had not other circumstances intervened to alter her purposes.

When Mr. Johnson was re-admitted into our family, my son took the liberty of telling me that I should repent my weakness sooner or later; and shewed such marked insolence towards him and to all his party, that my wife became exceedingly angry; and I thought it right to reprove the young man; on which he submitted. But Mr. Johnson took upon him, soon after this, to give him a private

lecture on his behaviour to his mother; on which, he broke out again, and we were all in such confusion, that I became weary of my home, and began to frequent a club in an evening, where I met my neighbours and enjoyed some quiet. But the more frequently I absented myself from home, the more influence Mr. Johnson obtained there; and such, at length, was the disorder among us, that I became thoroughly irritated; and, no doubt, often acted the part which I most opposed in others, namely, that of the domestic tyrant.

While things were in this state, a proposal was made to me, by the father of a young farmer in the neighbourhood, for Bessy. I approved this proposal, and mentioned it to my family. But it seems that Mr. Johnson had a friend of his own whom he wished to recommend, and my wife was, of course, on his side. My son also had some dispute with the young man I wished for a son-in-law; and Bessy had also ideas of her own on the subject. My proposition, therefore, met with general opposition; and Bessy told me, with a great deal of pertness, that she

thought it very hard I should attempt to bias her inclinations ; that the time was past in which parents were permitted to regulate their children's opinions ; and that I had never thought it necessary to attend to my father's injunctions, and she did not see why she was to attend to me.

My wife also attacked me, pleading that the son-in-law I proposed was not a religious man, and that, therefore, she could not consent to the marriage. And William told me plainly that he would have nothing to do with him, and would not own him as a brother.

I was almost driven out of my senses by these provocations, and, in my passion, I told Bessy that she should either marry the man I proposed, or go to service ; telling my son, at the same time, that if he did not choose to submit to me, he might find another home and another master ; and, so saying, I hastened to my club, where, meeting some of my old companions, I opened my whole mind to them.

“ It is entirely owing to your new fancies, Mr. Penson,” answered a respectable mercer,

who was sitting at the same table; "all owing to your march of intellect business, your toleration, and your contempt of old saws and the wise ways of our ancestors. I expected how things would end, when you told Mr. Bell there, our good schoolmaster, that you never would have a son of yours corrected, although Solomon advised it; who, being the wisest of men, and, more than that, inspired of God himself, might be supposed to understand these matters as well as you or I, and, surely, a little better. But it is of no use talking now the affair is past. I see nothing left for you to do, but to stand to what you have said: if Miss Bessy continues refractory, just hand her up to her own bedroom and turn the key upon her; and if Master William is insolent, take a cane and lay it over his back. As to your wife, I say nothing; he is a bold man, indeed, who meddles between man and wife. Only this much I will venture to affirm, if my wife did not choose to do as I bid her, why I should be apt to make a division of the house between her and me; and I would be liberal with

her, and give her the largest share; inasmuch as the outside of a box, or cask, or house, or whatever it may be, is larger than the inside by the width of the wall, or the wood-work, or whatever else it may happen to be made of;" and he nodded to the gauger across the table, and appealed to him for the truth of this assertion.

Mr. Bell here interrupted the mercer, by saying, "Let us forbear looking back, Mr. Rickets; you only make Mr. Penson more unhappy, and that there is no need of; we have all judged amiss in our time. No man is infallible; and hence the wisdom of following the old, tried, and beaten path—the path which is sanctified by its agreement with the way of holiness. It is now our business, as friends, to give Mr. Penson our best advice; as we would do to you, Mr. Rickets, if you had made a bad speculation in your business, or committed any other error. My advice is, that, as Mr. Penson is blessed with one of the best of brothers, whose children do him all the credit a father could desire, he should walk over to the Woodhouse to-morrow, be-

fore he takes any rash steps, and hear what counsel Mr. Robert has to give."

It would have been well, had I followed this temperate advice of Mr. Bell; but the schoolmaster, having thus uttered his sentiments, left us, as he always did, after he had taken one cup of ale. And then the subject being re-discussed, with the assistance of a bowl of punch, I became so inflamed and heated, that I returned to my house intent upon the strongest measures. And, being again provoked by the manner of my wife and children, when I entered the parlour, I locked Bessy in her room, laid my walking-stick over the shoulders of my son, and sent my wife crying to her chamber; having attributed faults to her of which she was not guilty.

There was a large sofa in the parlour, and there I lay, after I had cleared the parlour, till the night-bell informed me that I must be up and away, my assistance being required at six miles' distance.

Roger, the boy, whose business it was, called me immediately when the bell rang, and has-

tened into the yard behind the house to saddle my horse. Being already dressed, and finding that the horse was not brought to the door, I went myself into the yard, and, in so doing passed under my daughter's window. There was a light in the room, and, as I stepped quietly along, Bessy opened the window, and said, "Roger, is it you?"

I stood still, but did not answer at first.

"I say, Roger," she continued, "is father going out? I heard the night-bell."

"Yes!" I thundered out, "I am going out, Miss; but I shall be back very soon—before you want me. What do you require of the boy?"

"Nothing, father, nothing," she answered; "but I feared something was the matter."

"What," I asked, "did you never hear the night-bell before, that you should be calling to the boy at this hour? Put out your light, and go to bed, or I will make you know what it is to have an angry father." The window was immediately shut, and the light put out; and I mounted immediately and rode out of the yard.

I was detained with my patient till towards the afternoon of the next day ; and my reader may be well assured that during that detention my uneasiness was very great. I can hardly account for the apprehensions I endured at that time ; they were such, however, that when I alighted at my own door, I hastened into the shop saying, "Where is Bessy ? where is William ?" And thus speaking, I proceeded through the shop into the parlour, and there found Mrs. Penson in tears, while Mr. Johnson on one side of her, and Mrs. Seymour on the other, were engaged in consoling her, while she seemed to be refusing all comfort.

Mr. Johnson stepped forward immediately to explain the mystery to me. He told me that William had been missing ever since I had quitted home, during the night ; and that a letter he had left unsealed on his table addressed to me, had left no doubt that he had formed his plans deliberately ; had set coolly to work to make good his escape from the parental roof ; and that there was little hope of his being brought back.

Mr. Johnson handed the letter to me as he spoke, but I was unable to read it at that time: my feelings were too powerful at the moment for my reason: I was like one beside himself: I wished myself dead, or rather that I had never been born: I know not what extravagances I uttered. But at length gaining more self-command, I read the letter, and then solemnly renounced my son; saying to those present, that, as I could only blame myself for over indulgence and too great kindness, I should ever henceforward consider that young man as a stranger who could thus coolly and deliberately cut the ties which bound him to his family, and requite affection by the most base and black ingratitude.

Mrs. Penson here warmly addressed me. "Nay, my dear," she said, "surely you would not renounce the poor boy! Will you not try to trace him out? Will you not endeavour to bring him back? Will you not forgive him?"

"No!" I replied, in the bitterness of my feelings, "let him go; let him taste the fruits of his own evil works; let him know what

want and hardships are. May he come to beg a piece of bread ! or to feed with the prodigal on the husks which are thrown to the swine ! ”

Mrs. Seymour retorted severely upon me for this. “ Mr. Penson,” she said, “ is this you ? Have you wholly forgotten your own principles ? Are you entirely departed from them ? Have I not often heard you say that mercy is a god-like attribute ; and that the Creator, having endowed us with fine reasoning faculties, and various senses by which we may receive pleasure from outward things, has placed us in a world wherein we find a variety of objects to gratify those senses ; but exercises no further influence over us : on the contrary, that he leaves us to act for ourselves, and to suffer or be miserable in consequence of our prudent or imprudent conduct ? Are not these your own words, Mr. Penson ? Are not these your own principles ? Why then should you be angry, past forgiveness, with your son, because he takes his own way instead of yours to make himself happy ? Has he not always evidenced an aversion for the pestle and mor-

tar? Why should you force him back to it? Why should you renounce him because his taste is dissimilar to your own?"

I made Mrs. Seymour no answer; but, turning abruptly to Mrs. Penson, "Has any money," I asked, "been lately paid into yours or your son's hands?—any large sum I mean by any of my customers?"

Mrs. Penson had been in the habit of sometimes receiving money for me and giving receipts.

She replied, that thirty pounds had been paid the day before, for which she had given a receipt.

"And where is that money?" I asked.

"I left it with my son," she replied, tremblingly; "and I understood that he had given it to you. He has often been intrusted to give you money which has been received."

Mr. Johnson and Mrs. Seymour here interfered, and begged me to look no further into this part of the affair; stating that my son's character would be for ever gone, if this part of the business were known.

I could make no reply; I sunk upon a

chair; and my groans were so loud, that the servant-maids were alarmed, and put their heads in at the parlour-door, to ascertain if some one was not very ill. Certain, however, it was that my unhappy son had robbed me, and was gone; and the reason he gave me for thus leaving me was, that I had struck him. Unhappy young man! had I corrected him sooner, had I made him feel that I would be master while he was yet in tender infancy, all this misery might have been spared him. But, alas! the evil which was done could not now be remedied. And such was my pride, that, after the first burst of agony was over, I made light of the matter; and even gave out, that, as I did not find my son suited for my profession, I had provided a situation for him at a distance. And this story I told at the Woodhouse; and though I was not believed, yet, there, as well as in other places, it had the effect of preventing any expressions of pity or condolence, which I dreaded to hear from any one.

In the mean time, I thought it best to permit Bessy to come out of her room; and I

rather hesitated whether it would be prudent to urge her to extremes by pressing upon her the marriage she professed to dislike. At the same time, I was very much hurt by her behaviour when she joined us again; and once or twice, when I hinted my wish to her that she would stay more at home, she was very impertinent. This impertinence being once exhibited in the presence of Mr. Johnson, he advised me to forbid her going out, excepting in company of her mother or with Mr. Seymour; informing me, that he had observed she was very fond of going to Mr. Ricketts's, who had an only son of nearly her own age, to whom he suspected she was attached.

I told Mr. Johnson, that, as Mr. Ricketts was an honourable man, and in good circumstances, and as his son also bore a very good name, I thought Bessy might do worse, and I would not interfere in the affair. But Mr. Ricketts was a declared opposer of Mr. Johnson's party; and therefore, though I could not be induced to take any steps which might preclude the meetings between these two

young people, yet Mr. Johnson so worked on Mrs. Penson, that she took care to break off the acquaintance, and would never suffer her daughter to go any where without her, but to Mrs. Seymour's.

While things were in this state, it was brought to my knowledge that Roger, who was an apprentice, had assisted to get my son's clothes out of the house, and had committed one or two other offences against strict honesty, of such a nature as would have entitled him to a severe punishment, that is, if the law had had its course.

When I found these things out, I was exceedingly angry, and was determined to bring the boy to trial: not that I had any wish or expectation of seeing him hanged, but I really did hope that he would be made to feel; and was about to take measures to this effect, when Mr. Johnson and the ladies all attacked me, Mrs. Seymour making the first assault. She began by stating that the poor boy was an orphan, wholly dependent on me; that he had been four years in my family; that his prospects were ruined for

ever if I made the affair public; that public punishments had lately been found to promote the increase of crime; that severity led to deceit; that man, in the present condition of society, could only be governed by reason; that the present state of the march of intellect would no longer admit of those arbitrary regulations by which kingdoms in a more savage state were kept in order; and that, if I not only would forgive the boy, but allow him a little pocket-money, and a few more indulgences, she would answer for his future good conduct, as she had much influence over him; he being the first cousin of her footman Samuel, the young man who had been my first patient in the family.

When Mrs. Seymour ceased to plead, Mr. Johnson, my wife, and daughter, were all ready to second her arguments; and the end of this was, that Roger was called in, told that he was to be forgiven, admonished to do better in future, and informed that he was to have sixpence a week for pocket-money, that he might not be driven to dishonesty for want 'of a penny. An'

this matter being settled agreeably, as Mrs. Seymour said, to my own liberal principles, Roger was dismissed to his own quarter of the house, to chuckle at the folly of his master, and to enjoy the contemplation of the agreeable reward he was to receive for his various delinquencies.

Thus I was persuaded to go on from one folly to another; though by this time I more than half suspected that the new lights of which I had so long boasted were little better than so many Will-o'-the-whisps, which would lead all who followed them into bogs and quagmires from which they would never help any to extricate themselves.

But I have scarcely patience to proceed narrating the wretched and low-lived perplexities in which my weakness and folly involved my unhappy family. It was not three months after the restoration of Roger to favour, that Bessy became of age; and received into her possession a hundred pounds, which had been left her by a distant relation of her mother's. And what was the step she took on finding herself mistress of

this hundred pounds I am ashamed to say; yet truth compels me to say.—On my giving her some slight offence, she took an opportunity to run away; and the person she chose for the companion of her flight was the smart footman of Mrs. Seymour—the cousin of Roger; and no doubt this affair had not been helped forward a little by the boy whom I had so weakly pardoned.

Here was an unlooked-for blow; yet, when the thing was past, my wife recollects a thousand little incidents, which, had not her mind been turned to other matters, might have awakened her suspicions, and perhaps prevented the evil.

The naughty girl had managed matters so artfully, that she could not be traced till after she had been married some weeks. She was then discovered in a mean lodging, in a large manufacturing town, at some distance from our village. She had wounded my pride too deeply to allow me to forgive her. I refused to see her; and I did right: and she would have had nothing to complain of, had I from the first acted consistently with her:

but I had brought her up without respect either for God or man; I had filled her mind with false notions of the Deity, and of herself; I had accustomed her to suppose that the blind obedience which parents require from children, in infancy, was a thing at once absurd and out of date; that the Almighty was weakly merciful; and that no one man had a right to control another in matters which did not immediately concern himself; and that it was a godlike attribute to forgive offences, and to heap kindness on the offender, without even exacting a change of feelings or of habits in that offender. I had also taught her that it was cruel to exercise any thing like discipline over a faithless wife, or an undutiful son or daughter, so long as any hopes remained of reclaiming such a one by tenderness; and, although I had not forgiven my son, she had not entertained the least doubt but that I should be ready to do so the moment he chose to claim my pardon. She was, therefore, quite astonished when I gave her notice that I would not see her if she offered to

come to our village; and equally so when she was informed, through Mrs. Seymour, that I would allow her twenty pounds a year, but only on condition that neither she nor her husband ever appeared before me, or were seen in the parish.

My mind, which had been gradually opening to the errors—not to say the wickedness—of my past life, was at this time in a degree of trouble which I cannot describe. I was made to see my sins in an awful light by their consequences—the ruin of my children—my unhappy children. I saw, too, that the present misery of my wife was owing to my conceited folly. Had I admitted her to my friendship and confidence when we first married, from how many follies and mistakes might I have preserved her!

In all these sad reflections, but one consoling thought remained; and that was, my little Sarah, now thirteen years of age, was as yet uninjured—she had been brought up in innocence and simplicity—and she might yet be a comfort and honour to her unhappy parents.

Though I had not followed William when he ran away, I had used every means, and employed every friend I had, to trace the steps of Bessy; but, as I before said, did not find her till it was too late, and till she had been actually married several days. I did not then see her; but, having ascertained her situation, I came home immediately; and there, being seized with a violent fever, was confined by illness so long, and recovered so slowly, that I was compelled to take an assistant for a term of years.

Thus was a considerable part of my gains cut off; and I was ashamed to look my father and mother, or my brother, in the face: neither could I contemplate their two fine and hopeful sons without a degree of anguish which it is not in my power to depict: and at one time my sufferings both of body and mind were so acute, that I became delirious; and in my delirium called vehemently for my parents and my brother.

They were immediately sent for; and were in the more haste to come, as I had before refused to see them; under the idea that they

would triumph over me in my misfortunes. I knew them immediately, and begged my parents pardon for all my undutiful conduct; and, stretching out my arms to Robert, I said, “O that I had cultivated your friendship! —that I had not despised my brother!—that I had not counted myself among the wise ones of the earth!—that I had not believed the present generation to be wiser than all which had gone before!—that I had not vainly supposed that new light could be thrown on those eternal truths which were taught by inspiration ere yet our fathers or our fathers’ fathers had seen the light of day!” I then wandered from the subject; and raved about my children, and called them my lost and ruined ones; neither could I be persuaded, for a while, but that they were both dead.

In this wretched and bewildered state I remained till the fever left me; and, as soon as it was possible, I was removed to the Wood-house; where the best chamber in the house was allotted for my use; and my little Sarah was appointed to be my nurse, under the direction of my mother and sister-in-law;

my wife being obliged to remain at home, to direct, as well as lay in her power, the new assistant in the management of the business. Poor woman! what must have been her sufferings at that time! being parted from all her children, and groaning, as she did, under the same blows which had reduced me almost to the gates of death.

But, as I was saying, my little Sarah was my constant attendant at that time; and I very well remember a conversation which I had with this child, one Sunday evening, when most of the family were at church, which made a deep and lasting impression on my mind. She began by saying, "Father, shall I read to you? I have here the Bible, and the Pilgrim's Progress;" and she mentioned one or two more books.

"Dear child," I answered, "I cannot attend to reading: I can think of nothing but of your miserable brother and sister."

The tears came into her eyes, and she answered, "Cannot any thing be done for them, father?"

"Nothing! nothing!" I answered: "they

are both ruined, and ruined by me, because I did not restrain them when they were children."

"Something might yet be done for them, father," she answered: "we might pray for them; and if we pray in our Lord Jesus Christ's name, and for his sake, our heavenly Father will hear us."

"I am not fit to pray, Sarah," I said.

"Then, father, you might ask our Saviour to intercede for you," she replied.

This was a new idea to me; and I asked her what she meant.

"Our Saviour is man as well as God, you know, father," she answered; "and, as mediator, and our friend and brother, he has prayed the Father for us; and his continued intercessions will be heard."

"How do you know this, Sarah?" I asked.

She immediately shewed me 1 Tim. ii. 5. *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;* and 1 John ii. 1.—*We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

I held the book in my hand, and was lost in meditation; while my little girl, looking

upon me with innocent glee, said, "Is it not so, father? have not we got a Friend to pray for us who will do better than we can?"—My aunt often tells me, when I do not feel in a state of mind to pray, to go into my room, and ask my dear Saviour to pray for me; and it makes me very happy when I do so."

"Happy!" I repeated; "are you ever unhappy, Sarah?"

"Sometimes," she replied, "when I cannot do well—when I cannot love God; and that often happens. My heart is very wicked."

I asked her what she meant by her heart being wicked—a question which seemed to surprise her; and she replied, "All our hearts are wicked, are they not, father?"

I asked her how she knew that.

On which, she shewed me Jer. xvii. 9.—*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*

"You seem," I said, "to turn to the Bible on every subject, Sarah."

She looked more surprised than ever, and said, "Does not every Christian do so, father? My aunt tells me that we may find

rules for every thing in the Bible; and she also says, that, when people desert the Bible, to make out rules for themselves, they become puzzled and confused, and sometimes quite mistake what is right and what is wrong; and often, the more clever they think themselves, the more foolish they become."

"Did she mention to you the name of any particular person who has done this, Sarah?" I enquired.

"No," she replied, "she mentioned no particular person; but only told me, that, if I grew conceited, and thought that my own opinion was better than the law of God, I should soon prove myself to be a fool."

"True; very very true, Sarah," I said; "and she might have told you that your father has been that fool to whom she alluded: for I have not only despised the Bible, but all those persons who drew their wisdom from the Bible, and their authority from God; and I have ruined your brother and sister." I could restrain myself no longer; I burst into tears as I spoke; for I was very weak; and poor little Sarah mingled her tears with mine.

From that day, it pleased God so to work upon my heart, that I began to look upon my former life, and all my former false, conceited, and absurd opinions, with the horror and contempt which they well deserved. I was caused to see that all these false opinions had been built upon an erroneous view of the nature of man. The Bible tells us that *the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*; but the promoters of the liberal system, and the proclaimers of the march of intellect, tell us, that man is good by nature; and that it is to the unwise and tyrannical measures of government, and the want of education, that we must attribute all the miseries we see in the world: and in agreement with this idea I had acted. I had taken my views of God and his government from my own vain conceptions; I had despised all authorities, even that most sacred of all delegated authorities, namely, the parental one; and, in the disobedience to my own parents which I had displayed before the eyes of my children, I set them the example of rebellion to my authority: and I had done more;

in the abundance of my folly, and in the spirit of my absurd liberality, I had not guarded my privileges as a husband, as a master of a family, and a member of the Church as established by government; and had allowed persons of principles dissimilar to my own, to obtain influence in my family, and even to have a voice in my private consultations and domestic arrangements. But I had been made to suffer; and my sufferings were prolonged, through the mercy of God, till I had renounced for ever, I trust, all my absurd and impious notions, and until my rebellious will had been brought entirely under the control of that of the Almighty.

In the mean time, I recovered my health, and returned to my house, leaving my little Sarah in the happy home where she had ever been; and, from that time, I and my wife (though, alas! in some respects too late) did all that in us lay to comfort each other, and to consult each other's happiness. Mr. Johnson soon ceased to visit us when he found that the Church and the State were united again within our *domicile*—by which my

reader must understand, that the man and his wife were again of one mind, and were resolved to uphold each other; for it can only be in states and houses divided against themselves into which the enemy can ever hope to gain admittance. I also failed not (God being my helper) to seek, repeatedly, the pardon of my parents; and to make up to them, as much as in me lay, the loss they had sustained by my long course of rebellion and disobedience: and then, and not till then, did my wife and I begin to derive benefit from the friendship of my brother and his wife. I consulted Robert about my poor lost Bessy; telling him, that, for Sarah's sake, I thought it was still my duty to refuse to see her. He agreed with me in this; but, as I could well afford it, he engaged me to increase her allowance to thirty pounds a year; undertaking, most kindly, to look after her affairs, and to give her the best advice of which he was capable. From that time, he never mentioned her name to me; though, at the seasons when I paid the allowance, he generally gave me such hints as he

thought would administer comfort to me; assuring me, that, should her health fail, or any other circumstance call for my personal interference, he would give me timely notice.—But I never knew, during all that time, where my poor child resided; and this was also kept a secret, by my desire, from Mrs. Penson; for I felt, that, while Sarah was unmarried, we could not shew too decided a displeasure at the conduct of Bessy.

In the mean time, I knew that my unhappy daughter was in better hands than mine; and I endeavoured to be as easy about her as possible. But I had many sad hours, and many many bitter feelings, respecting my elder children: for years passed away, and I heard nothing of my poor boy; but I forgot all his undutiful conduct, and thought of him only as he was in his infancy; distressing myself frequently with the reflection of what he might have been had I acted the part of a Christian father to him. Nor were these reflections the least of my miseries. O how often, during that time, have I uttered the exclamation of David, crying, “ Oh, Absalom! my son! my son!”

And who could deny that I deserved all this suffering, and more than this? I am well assured that I did not receive one chastisement too much; for all was necessary to bring me to a sense of my sin; neither would any of these troubles have availed in the least to my reformation, had not the divine blessing been shed upon these afflictive dispensations. I was, indeed, as grass shorn and cut down to a level with the dust; but I should also have withered, as grass cut down, had not the dew of heaven descended upon me, and occasioned the withered blade to spring again.

It was during this period that circumstances led me to a consideration of the nature of our Church establishment, on which I had formerly looked with such infinite contempt; and then I perceived, that, notwithstanding there might be some little things connected with it which we might reasonably wish otherwise, yet that, taken as a whole, in its Liturgy, its Articles, its various forms and ordinances, man had never been able to produce a system at once so noble, so simple, so useful, and so happily conformed to Scripture. "And

this," I said, "is the nursing-mother whom I have despised, and taught my children to despise! this is the mother whom I have hated, neglected, and endeavoured to despoil!" And, on remembering these things, I have often wept like an infant, crying, "My Father!" I was then brought to see the beauty and consistency of our holy religion; and to observe how my errors of faith had, in a considerable degree, arisen from a false view of the divine attributes.

In common with many other pragmatical persons, I had formed an ideal deity to myself, as totally different from the God of Scripture as Mahomet is unlike to Christ. The god of my folly was a supposed indulgent parent; paying little regard to the proceedings of his children, so long as they transgress not certain bounds; which, by the by, were always regulated by my own pleasure: but, when I came to examine the character of the Deity by Scripture, I discovered at once, to my utter dismay, that he is a God of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; one, in fact, that cannot tolerate sin; and ora-

who, from the perfection of his nature, cannot pass over the slightest transgression, without regard to justice, or atonement.

The incapacity of the Deity (to speak after the manner of men) to overlook sin without departing from the perfection of his nature, was, accordingly, the truth which, being strongly fixed upon my mind, by the divine blessing, conducted me to the knowledge of other doctrines of true religion; for how could I rest under the impression of being continually beneath the eye of a perfectly just God, unless I had some means of appeasing his justice? I was not so ignorant of myself as to think it possible I could, by any efforts of my own, render myself acceptable in the view of perfect holiness; nor was I so absurd as to expect, that, if I could not find help and comfort in Christ, there was any prospect of obtaining it through any other mediator proposed by man.

To Christ then I turned my attention; and, by the divine blessing on the study of Scripture, and the Articles of our Church, the truth of the Holy Trinity was unfolded

to me in all its glory ; and all became plain and satisfactory to my mind ; while the whole system of revelation was developed to me with increased beauties and glory.

My creed was then fixed ; which may thus be stated :—There is one God eternal, infinitely holy, just, and merciful, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. This God, even the Lord Jehovah, cannot change ; nor can aught be added to or deducted from his infinite perfections. In this one glorious Essence there are three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. These three Persons are called first, second, and third, in reference to the parts they take in the work of man's salvation. Man, having been made in innocence, corrupted himself through the malice of Satan, and rendered himself the heir of everlasting damnation. But his Father and Creator, having foreseen his fall before the foundation of the world, planned, in his infinite wisdom, a means, whereby he should not only be set at liberty from the bondage of Satan, but be infinitely elevated in the scale of beings ; and rendered more gloriously

happy and blessed, in proportion to the guilt and misery in which he had been sunk : for *where sin abounded, grace hath much more abounded.*

I was further taught, that, in accordance with this everlasting purpose, God the Father had chosen, from the mass of mankind, multitudes past all calculation to be rescued from destruction, and made heirs of glory. But inasmuch as (from the necessity of the divine nature) this could not be done, and mercy flow to us, till divine justice should receive satisfaction, God the Son descended from heaven within the four thousandth year of the world ; and, uniting the two natures of God and man, fulfilled the moral law, and bore its penalties; and not only obtained our justification by his obedience and death, but through his infinite merit entitled believers to the enjoyment of everlasting glory. Thus God incarnate not only obtained for all who believe in him, and all, in fact, who do not reject his offers of mercy, eternal happiness in the world to come, but also entitled them, in this world, to the precious benefits conferred

by the teaching of the Holy Spirit—that sacred Person of the adorable Trinity who has, in his infinite mercy, taken upon himself to call, to regenerate, to sanctify, and finally to glorify, all such as have been predestinated to salvation by God the Father.

Such is the outline of the creed which, through the divine blessing on the study of the Word of God, and the conversation of my brother, I was led to adopt soon after my misfortunes and my illness; and I do thank God that my opinions from that period have never varied in any one essential point.—But to return to my narrative.

Sarah was thirteen at the time of the marriage of poor Bessy; and the next eight years were to me a period of deep distress, though no doubt they were the most blessed years of my life. What a change passed on me during that time—a blessed change I trust! for I then was taught to hate and loath myself more, if possible, than I had ever admired and loved myself. The character of my wife, too, seemed, through the power of religion, to have been entirely changed; and I was led to

wonder how I could have lived so long with her, without having understood her better, or loved her more.

The assistant I had taken, when I was very ill, had remained with me four years; and, afterwards, having taken my brother's second son into the shop, he proved a real comfort to me after my assistant left me; and from that period, indeed, he never left me, excepting when he went to London to finish his studies.

Dear Sarah remained at the Woodhouse, for I never would hear of her being removed; and I was never more pleased than when my brother asked her of me for his eldest son. We had all seen that these young people were attached for some years to each other, and, therefore, were not surprised at the request. The marriage, however, was put off a year on account of the death of my poor father; and, as my mother was almost childish and excessively fond of Sarah, we thought it would be cruel to part them; and it was agreed that George and his wife should still live with their parents; a plan which has been found to an-

swer in my brother's family, though not generally, I think, to be recommended.

Sarah was in her twenty-second year when the wedding-day was fixed. It was the sixteenth of May, and happened to be remarkably fine weather.

It was not a very busy time with me, and things so fell out that I could allow myself twenty-four hours or more of holiday on the occasion; my nephew having most dutifully insisted on returning to the shop immediately after the ceremony; which I esteemed as a great kindness; for I much desired to make one of the happy bridal party; who, after the wedding-breakfast, were to take a little excursion, and not to return till the noon of the next day.

The marriage took place at the parish church soon after eight in the morning; and the party consisted of my mother, my brother and sister, myself, and my wife, the bride and bridegroom of course, and my younger nephew; not to omit a little fair girl named Lucy Howard, who was bridesmaid, and who was all innocent delight on the occasion.

This little girl is now my niece, being married to my second nephew.

From the church we came to my house, where we had breakfast; and then my mother went home, while we proceeded in a hired coach to the place where we were to spend the day.

There is in our neighbourhood a famous ruin, near to which is a good inn, which I thought would be a very proper place for us on this occasion; but Sarah insisted on spending the day at a rural inn on the borders of the same extent of woodlands in which the Woodhouse is built, and just on the verge of the park of the same nobleman whose tenant my brother is, as much as four or five miles from the Woodhouse. I had seen this inn several times: it is a large black timbered building, having the highroad and my Lord's park in front of it; and behind it a dingle, and the woods; a very pretty place, assuredly, but very much out of the way, I thought, for a bridal party. But Sarah had set her mind upon this plan; and, if ladies ever are to pursue their own

plans, surely it ought to be on their wedding-day.

Well, into the coach we all got, to the number of six, and as merry a party we were as ever met; for I tried to conceal any painful reminiscences I might have on that happy day; and my brother and sister were the gayest of the gay; and their son the most happy looking being I had ever beheld; and we laughed as we went along, and talked nonsense; yet, from time to time, some pious expression of gratitude to God would drop from the mouth of one present; and the tears would tremble in every eye, and these again were chased away by the smiles of innocent joy.

Most of our way lay through woods, and it was scarcely noon when we arrived at our inn. Dinner had been ordered for us; and I remember that roast lamb and green peas made part of our regalement; and, while it was getting ready, we rambled in what directions we chose, two or more together. At two we met and dined, in a large low parlour, with casement windows, and hung round with

rudely coloured engravings of the Prodigal Son.

The story of the Prodigal Son was a very affecting one to me at that time; but every one was careful not to make any remarks on these prints.

We did not sit long after dinner, my sister Ellen having proposed a walk to a lodge at a very small distance from the inn, which she said opened into my Lord's park, and was reported to be one of the most beautiful structures of the kind which had ever been seen in the country. Having desired that tea should be ready for us on our return, we all set out, taking our course under a sort of avenue, formed on one side by the trees of the park, and on the other by the skirts of the wood. We started together, but soon dropped off in pairs, my companion being my sister Ellen; the little bridesmaid making excursions in several directions; pleading for her excuse, that she had no companion but an old dog of mine whom I had cherished till he had not a tooth in his head, because when very young he had belonged to poor William.

My sister Ellen was always a remarkably pleasant, lively companion, in an agreeable way : yet I could not help observing, as we walked along, that she became absent, and that more than once she scarcely heard me when I addressed her. "Well," I thought, "it is natural ; joy absorbs the thoughts, no doubt, as powerfully as grief."

At length the gates of the park appeared, and close to them, within the park, the roof of the lodge. In truth it was a very pretty construction ; it looked like some of those toys which ingenious children form of moss and pasteboard. I shall describe it as it appeared to me when arrived in full view of it. It was a thatched cottage of one floor, having a centre apartment, with a rural porch in front, and on either side the porch a casement window, pointed, and having its upper compartments filled with stained glass ; the roof over the porch was rounded and thickly set with thatch. On each side the centre room were wings terminating with gable ends, and windows looking to the north towards the park, and to the south towards

the road. These windows were also Gothic, and each of these gable ends contained two rooms. Behind was a kitchen-garden and small court, and in front was a little portion of ground richly planted with roses, eglantines, jasmines, hyacinths, wall-flowers, polyanthus, ranunculus, and every species of fragrant herb. The wall of this edifice was rough-cast, and coloured, to resemble stone, and the wood work was painted green. Some of the windows were almost overgrown with the luxuriant branches of odoriferous creepers. The view commanded by some of the windows of this cottage must, no doubt, have been beautiful in the extreme; for the glimpses I had through the openings of the trees, even from the highroad, of the various lovely natural objects was enchanting.

But my reader will ask, "What is all this to me? is the doctor becoming sentimental and poetical in his old age? What have we to do with the beauties of nature and ornamented cottages? Had he not better stay at home and mind his shop?"—Well, then, we will

have no more descriptions, but proceed with our walk.

The bride and bridegroom, who had walked first, stopped for us when they had reached the gate of the park; and we came up just as they had made themselves heard by the persons within the lodge, for, the next moment, the door was opened, and two little girls, apparently of the same age, (being perhaps about six years old,) came quickly forward; and, passing through the green wicket of the garden, stood before us on the other side of the gate. One held a key, but made no attempt to apply it to the lock; on the contrary, they both stood courtesying, and blushing, and appearing evidently alarmed at the party without.

"What pretty creatures!" exclaimed our merry little maid: on which, she was gently reproved by my sister Ellen; who seldom lost sight of propriety and prudence. Yet I could not help saying to my sister, in a low voice, "Those children are as remarkable, of their kind, as their habitation is. What little delicate beings! and how nicely they

are dressed, in their pink-striped frocks! how fair and lovely they are! and what brilliant eyes they have! But, my little maids," I said, addressing them, "are we to stand here all day, looking at your pretty faces through the bars of this gate? Will you not open to us?"

"Mary can't unlock the gate, Sir," replied one of the little fair ones, with a low courtesy and a deep blush.

"Then let the other try," I replied.

"Ellen can't unlock the gate, Sir," replied the other, courtesying and blushing in her turn.

"Come, come," said my brother, laughing; "we will soon settle that: give us the key, and let us see what we can do."

The key was immediately handed through the bars, and we found ready admittance. "And now," said Robert, "shew us the way to your house, little damsels: "you must go first, lest we should lose ourselves."

The two little ones then, taking each other's hands, walked before us through the green wicket up to the porch, which, by the

by, like that of a Mahometan temple, was nearly as large as all the rest of the house beside; and, the door being already open, we were introduced into a roomy kitchen, paved with square flags, neatly whitewashed, and in every respect as nice as hands could make it. One of the casements was open, and an eglantine had made its way through it in a most fantastic style. A fire of wood was burning on the hearth, and a hissing kettle was hanging over the fire; but not a living creature was seen within the apartment but a cat, who at the sight of my dog raised her back, and placed herself in an attitude of self-defence.

"This is Fairy-Land, I suppose?" said Lucy Howard; "for I see no inhabitants in this house, but these two fairies and their cat."

"Our cat's name is Tippet, Ma'am," said one of the little girls, courtesying very low.

"Is Tippet a fairy, too?" asked Lucy.

"We have got the story of the white cat who was a fairy," said the other of the little beauties, courtesying in her turn; "but Tippet is not a fairy."

"Indeed!" said Miss Lucy: "are you quite sure?"

"There are no fairies now, Ma'am," answered the first little speaker, laying a very strong stress on the word Ma'am, and courting every time she used it; her little dimpled hands being placed very formally before her.

"Upon my word," I said, "you are the two most delightful and amusing little personages I ever beheld;" and I made each of them a very low bow, which they returned in the gravest manner possible by two low courtesies, which set Lucy laughing again: but I was surprised at the same time to observe that tears were in the eyes of Ellen and my daughter. I, however, asked no questions; for my spirits that day were in such a state that I did not dare to meddle with any thing which might excite any pathetic or tender feelings.

"But have you not a parlour to shew us, little dames?" said Lucy: "where is your parlour?"

The little girls immediately moved hand-in-

hand to a door on the left side of the kitchen, and, opening it, we walked into a considerably large sitting-room, on the northern side of the cottage, in which a window at one end commanded a view of the park, where the deer were feeding in various groups. This parlour was hung with a green paper representing a thick foliage, and set round with chairs so painted and constructed as to resemble roots of trees ; in each corner was an old-fashioned cupboard painted with some curiously whimsical devices ; and in the centre of the room was a table covered with a green cloth, on which lay several books, a flute, and some needlework. There was one thing, however, which surprised us much—there was an inner door in this parlour, and the outer door was scarcely opened, before my dog rushed in, and flew to the inner door, whining, scratching, and seeming as if he would have torn up the very floor. The children were frightened at this, and I was surprised ; but my nephew drove him out, and shut the door of the house against him.

When the dog was out we began talking

again to the little girls. "I do like to hear these children talk," said Lucy, "and to set them a courtesying and saying, 'Ma'am : I must set them going again.' And she turned to them, and said, "Are these your chairs, my dears?"

"They are our chairs, Ma'am," was the answer she received ; the little speaker courtesying low at the same time.

"Ladies come here and drink tea, Ma'am, sometimes," said the other little blushing one.

"And sit on these chairs, Ma'am," said the first.

"Well then," said my brother, smiling, "I suppose we may do as the ladies do. Suppose we were to seat ourselves, and then we might talk more at our ease. "Come, tell me," he added, drawing the little girls towards him, each by one hand ; "what do the ladies do when they come?"

"They do drink tea, Sir," said one.

"They do eat bread and butter, Sir," said the other.

"And we have the best china, Sir, when they come," added the first.

"The china with strawberries on it, Sir," said the second.

"Do the ladies love you?" asked Miss Howard.

"When we are good they do love us," they both answered.

"But you are never naughty, are you?" asked Miss Howard.

They both blushed at this question, and one answered, "Nobody is quite good."

"Why, what do you do which is naughty?" asked Lucy.

"That is not a fair question," said my brother: "we have no right to bring them to confession. See how the little things blush: their very necks are red. This is not a polite return for their hospitality."

"But they are such delightful creatures," said Miss Howard: "I never saw any thing like them: do let me talk to them. Please to tell me," she then added, "which of you two is the better girl? I must know."

"Mary is the best," replied one of them.

"No, I am not, Ellen is the best," replied the other; "but the ladies say we are neither

of us good ; and they shewed it us in the Bible ; and they made us learn it."

" What did you learn ? " asked Lucy ; " please to repeat it."

They both answered together, "*Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.*" (Prov. xxii. 15.)

" But nobody uses a rod to you, I am sure," said Lucy : " you never saw a rod, I am certain."

The two little creatures reddened violently on hearing this question, and tears came into their eyes ; and we all felt that Lucy was making too free with them, and had hurt their feelings ; and she felt it herself ; for she got up and kissed them both, and said, she would not talk of such things any more. " But," she added, " now tell me, do you live here by yourselves ? Is there nobody here to take care of you ? "

" We must not talk about that," they answered.

" About what ? " she asked.

- " About our mother," they replied.

"Not about your mother, how strange!" said Miss Howard. "Why must not you?"

"Because she told us we must not," they answered.

"When did she tell you that?" asked Lucy.

"When she sent us to open the gate."

"But you may tell now about your mother," said my sister-in-law. And, as quick as thought, she rose up, and, taking the little girls each by a hand, she led them to me, and, directing them to kneel down, she said, "Join your little hands, my darlings, and say, 'Please, grandpapa, see and forgive your penitent and humble daughter! Please, grandpapa, forgive your own poor child, our dear, dear mother!'"

O, my reader! conceive, if you can, what I felt when I beheld these two lovely babes kneeling before me, in obedience to their aunt, and lifting up their little united hands, their baby hands, while terror was depicted on their infant features—for they could not, and did not, understand the affair. Conceive, if you can, what the feelings of my wife were, whose

surprise was equal to mine, on the occasion, as she had not the least suspicion of what was to be the result of our meeting at this cottage. I fell back in my chair—I groaned—I was unable to decide. I looked at the babes, my feelings were strongly drawn towards them, but I was motionless.

“They have only one parent,” said my sister, “their father has long, long forsaken them; nay, he left your daughter before these babes saw the light. He can have no part either in your anger or your forgiveness; neither do we ask you to restore your daughter to the place from which she has thrown herself. We only ask you to pronounce your forgiveness; to give her your blessing; and to tell her that you look forward with hope to a happy re-union with her in that blessed place where all tears shall be wiped from every eye.”

As my sister proceeded, I burst into tears; and, bending forwards, drew up the two little innocent ones into my arms. This action was interpreted in favour of the petition; and when I lifted up my eyes again all surcharg-

ed with tears, I saw the inner door of the parlour standing open, and in the doorway two figures, the one of a female and the other of a middle-aged man, a little retired in the back-ground.

In the foremost of these I recognized my poor Bessy at once; but, probably, more because I was prepared to see her than from any other circumstance: but I had not the least recollection of the person who stood near to her, and should, no doubt, have supposed him to have been her husband, had I not been just informed that he had long left her. I, however, did not bestow more than a single glance upon this second person, for my eyes were rivetted on my daughter. But O, how entirely changed, how altered was my child! how suddenly passed away, as I looked upon her, the hope I had before entertained, in spite as it were of my reason, of seeing her blooming and lovely in person as I remembered her to be formerly! for Bessy once was a very pretty girl. But she who now appeared to me was sallow and broken down; and dressed, though neatly indeed, in a very humble style,

with no pretensions to any thing of the lady in her manners; her person, too, was much sunk; and she looked some years older than she ought to have done. She stood trembling with her eyes fixed upon me, with that sort of imploring look which a criminal uses towards a severe judge; while all the rest of the party had gathered behind me, leaving the space clear between me and the offender, with the exception only of my wife, who had sunk upon a chair by my side, and was weeping audibly.

A minute or perhaps more elapsed before I could speak. At length I pronounced the name of Bessy; and at the same instant being admonished by a sign from my brother, (as I afterwards learned,) she came trembling forwards, and with her the man before mentioned. And then, agitated as I was, I first discovered that this poor man had lost a limb, and was halting on a stump affixed to the knee. But they both advanced and knelt at some short distance from me, as if they dared not come nearer; and I heard some broken words, amid which, I distinguished, "Father—

father—pardon—pity—forgiveness—we have offended.” I arose, and in rising pushed away the little twins, but stood fixed to the spot; my eyes being rivetted on the man who knelt by my daughter. A poor, low person, I thought him. He was clad in very coarse garments, though he was perfectly clean. He had a sort of shabby military air, and wore a stiff black stock upon his neck; his features elongated and emaciated; his mouth was disfigured by a broad gash, which had probably been made by a sabre; while his complexion was sunburnt and weatherbeaten like one who had been long exposed to every variety of intemperate climate.

Such was the person which knelt by Bessy, and he seemed as deeply concerned as she could be in the result of the next word which I should utter; for his eyes were brim-full of tears, and some drops had already strayed down his rough cheek. Yet, intently as I looked upon him, I had not the smallest recognition of his person, and was ready to ask, “Who are you, who thus dare to intrude upon our retirement?” when my brother

whispered the name of William; and the next moment I had fallen forward into the arms of my two children, weeping on their bosoms more like an infant than a man who had weathered so many storms of life.

I can recollect nothing from the time when, stooping to embrace my children, I had fallen forward into their arms; neither could I define my feelings, or say what they were, when, recovering my recollection and composure, I was enabled to look again upon my altered Bessy and still more altered William. O what a conflict then took place within my breast of tenderness, remorse, pity, and shame! Where was the once self-sufficient, handsome youth, who used to grace my shop? where was my once blooming, sparkling, gay, and saucy Bessy? Till that very day, nay, till that very hour, I had always thought of them as they were when I last saw them. O what a revulsion; what a violent and sudden change, was there now in my ideas and views respecting them! There was a humility, a contriteness, and a tenderness in their aspects, which was touching in the extreme. Bessy was no longer

in appearance more than a sort of decent cottager; and poor William was completely fallen, in manners and deportment, into the rank of those with whom he had associated for the last eight or nine years; namely, the private soldiers, or, at best, the sergeants, of a marching regiment. For, as I was afterwards informed, when he left me, he had hastened to the nearest sea-port town; where, having soon spent all his money in riot and dissipation, he had enlisted into a regiment just embarking for foreign service, and had endured inconceivable hardships, until he lost a leg in the field of battle, and also received a severe wound upon the lip.

In looking upon my son especially, I felt that, much as I loved him, it would be totally impossible for me to restore him to the rank from which he had fallen; and, no doubt, the perplexed state of my feelings was observed by my brother, who, in his usually kind and cheerful way, said, "Come, my friends, I think it is time to put an end to this scene. I hope, niece, that you are provided with some person to whom you can

trust the keys of your house and your gate for a few hours: you must get yourself ready forthwith, and follow us, with your brother and the two little fairies, to the inn; and we will have one happy evening together." And, so saying, he took my arm, and, adding that he wished to speak alone with me, he led me out of the house into the park; and there we had a long conversation.

He informed me, that Lady —— (that is, the mother of his landlord, the nobleman in whose park we then were) had assisted him, from the very first, in his management of poor Bessy's affairs; that, after my daughter's husband had forsaken her, this excellent lady had placed her in some situation on her jointure land, which is in Yorkshire; and that, within a few weeks, she had brought her to the beautiful lodge where she then resided; "where," added Robert, "she lives rent free; and the pious old lady and her daughter-in-law often call upon her, lending her books, and directing her in the management of her lovely little girls. And the blessing of God, my dear brother," continued he, "has been shed upon

the various endeavours of these noble ladies with your poor daughter: for Bessy is now as humble a Christian character as I ever knew; and she will be perfectly content, now that she has received her parents' forgiveness. But we have all agreed, and the ladies at the Hall are of the same opinion, that she should be left where she is, and not be again introduced into the society from which she is fallen, and for which she has rendered herself unfit. She will be very happy in her cottage, where her duties lie; and if, once or twice a year, we have a family-meeting in this place, our natural affection will be kept up, without doing any violence to the established customs and opinions of society. Neither," he added, "do we wish that poor William should be brought back to your house. He has wholly lost the habits which would fit him for it, and he does not desire it; on the contrary, he shrinks from the idea. But he wishes to live here with his sister; and he will find much pleasant employment in the large garden which is behind the house, and in instructing his little nieces;

for he writes a good hand, and knows a good deal of some other things: and, what (though I mention it last) is better than all, I verily believe that he is a true penitent, and, in one word, a converted character; for, when he came back to us, he had in his knapsack a well-worn Bible, which his sister tells me has been his constant companion ever since. He has a small pension," continued Robert; "and, with what you allow his sister, they will do very well."

"And they shall do better still," I added; "I will certainly make poor William's income equal to his sister's, as long as he behaves well. And may God bless my children, and give us many a happy meeting with them in this place! for I admire their delicacy in not wishing to be set on a footing with their unoffending sister; and I thank them for it, and shall take account of it. And now tell me, whose scheme was it to bring us all together this day?"

"My wife's and your daughter's," replied Robert, smiling. "They would have it so: it has been long planned—ever since Bessy

came into the country ; and my little twin nieces were kept out of the way whenever we visited poor Bessy, that' they might act their parts in perfect simplicity. But we little thought, when we formed our plan, that poor William would have had his place in our drama. He came, poor fellow, to the Woodhouse three weeks since ; but none of the servants knew him ; and we got him away unsuspected."

I could not help smiling at this innocent contrivance of our fair relations, and said, " I shall remember them for this trick." But what man can anticipate the devices of the fair sex ?

'Was it any lingering remains of natural pride which made me feel relieved when I found it was not expected of me to introduce my poor children again to my neighbours, or was it merely a sense of propriety ? —Certainly I was relieved when this dread was removed ; and my brother and I were just turning about to leave the park, and to follow the rest of our party, who were already set out to the inn, when a little pony-carriage,

containing two ladies, came out from beneath a grove, and approached us. "There are poor Bessy's best friends," said my brother, "the excellent Ladies —."

The carriage drew near, and was stopped, while the elder of the two ladies addressed my brother. "We are glad to see you here, Mr. Penson," she said: "I trust that all has succeeded to your wishes. May we congratulate you on your son's happiness, and in the completion of the blessed work of reconciliation which was to crown this day?"

"Your Ladyship may rejoice with us on both accounts," replied my brother.

"God be praised!" returned the pious lady: then looking at me, "I suppose," she added, "that I now see the elder Mr. Penson?" and she paid me a compliment on the act of forgiveness which I had just performed; and assured me that she and her daughter would have a watchful eye upon my children, and would do all in their power to serve them.

The carriage passed on before I could express my feelings in any other way than by the most profound reverence.

When my brother and I came opposite the lodge, we found that our friends were already set out ; an old woman being stationed at the gate to lock it after us. When we entered on the road we saw the whole party before us ; and the appearances of my newly-found children struck me again in a manner which I cannot describe. Bessy looked not a bit better than a decent cottager in her Sunday-dress ; and poor William's figure, as he limped along with his wooden leg, his shapeless hat, and his sort of homespun coat, was even more strikingly pitiable. The dog was following his steps. The contrast of these figures with the gay bridal party was at the same time so singular, that I no sooner observed it, than I laughed aloud in a way most painful to me. I immediately checked myself, and then felt almost disposed to burst into tears. I could not conceal my agitation from my brother, but said, "O, Robert, Robert ! look at that poor fellow there, and see the punishment of my pragmatical self-conceit. I was wiser, forsooth, than all who had ever gone before me. I must be for striking out new ways, and enacting new

laws, and out-arguing Solomon himself; and see what I have made of it. Look at my son, and look at yours. See how blessed, how happy your George is, with his lovely young bride; while all the prospects of earthly prosperity are passed away already from before my poor, poor William. Lord have mercy on all those, who, forsaking the fountain of living waters, have hewed out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

My brother endeavoured to comfort me, and to shew me that all was for the best; and that all which had happened had been wonderfully overruled for the good of my children. And so well did he argue, that, before we arrived at the inn, I was composed, and able to sit down with a smiling countenance to the refreshments which were prepared.

And now my wife and I had full leisure to examine and caress our charming little grandchildren; and it was with the greatest pleasure that I found they were entirely submissive to the will of their mother. As to my wife, I verily thought she would have turned

childish, such was her delight in these little lovely creatures.

After our repast, my brother asked the company if they had any objection to reading and prayer.

"None in the world," I replied, speaking for the rest; "and permit me, dear brother, to choose our subject, viz. the first seven verses of the third chapter of the Second Epistle to Timothy."

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

My brother, having read these few verses,

closed the book, and turned to me, supposing that I had some remarks to make. Neither was he mistaken; for I took the occasion, first, to observe, that, by the latter times, in all probability, was meant the present period, as every thing tended to shew that things were pressing towards their end; and I then pointed out how the verses my brother had read were applicable to the present day; in which men, despising all those who had gone before them, and all the wholesome rules and customs of their forefathers, are for establishing a new order of things, and making new experiments, on subjects not only decided in ages past by the wisdom of man, but by the indisputable Word of the Almighty.

" Of the number of these pragmatical fools was I for many years," I added; " and, in that period, you, my poor children, Bessy and William, were committed to my care. God forgive me for the manner in which I fulfilled, or rather neglected, the awful charge! and God Almighty grant that my neglect of you may not extend its baneful influence into another world! William and

Bessy, I can never repair the injuries I have done you ; I can never restore you to those advantageous places in society from which you have fallen. I take it well of you that you do not require me to make the attempt. But I do hope and trust that I may be able to administer to your comfort in many ways ; to call often to see you ; and to be ready at all times to visit you in the moment of distress. And these babes—these little girls—" I could add no more. My wife, and every female in the room, began to sob ; and we could scarcely command sufficient composure to join in the short yet hearty prayer and thanksgiving to which Robert called our attention.

Thus closed that happy day ; and, from that time, we have kept its anniversary at the same inn, and with nearly the same party ; and have had reason, each year, to pour forth new songs of thanksgiving for the countless benefits of each succeeding twelvemonth. Neither is it the least benefit for which we have to praise the Lord, that we are all set free from that absurd system of liberality by

which every bond of society is broken through, and every ancient and sacred obligation dissolved; by which the wife is emancipated from the dominion of her husband, the child from that of the parent, the servant from that of his master, and the members of the Established Church from the authority of the legal ruler of the empire.

THE END.

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EDWARD
WATSON

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